WHERE WE STAND
ONE YEAR LATER
“Life with God is not immunity from difficulties, but peace in difficulties.”
- C.S. Lewis
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After the Borderline Shooting and the Woolsey Fire, the only thing I thought I needed was to get away. In my eyes, it was simple: To escape the trauma and aftermath from two enormously tragic events, I just needed to fly home.

But, as I soon came to find, the answer wasn’t that simple. As comforting as it was to breathe in clean, humid air, I was surrounded by people who had no clue what I’d just experienced. As good as their intentions were, friends and neighbors at home asked all the wrong questions. They wanted to know the specifics surrounding the shooting, the cause of the wildfire.

But they neglected to ask the one simple question I needed to hear most.

“Are you OK?”

A chain of three plain words, but ones I had not thought to ask myself, words that would have prompted an answer I desperately needed to examine.

It’s a question I don’t think we ask each other enough, especially months after these tragedies have unfolded. If there’s anything I’ve learned over the past year, it’s that no two people handle trauma the same way. Trauma has no finite end, no predictable moment where breathing gets easier.

As a community unified not only by our shared school colors but also by the effects of Borderline and Woolsey, it is each and every one of our responsibilities to ask one another these three words. It’s our shared burden as the people left to tell this story.

In these pages, we, the Graphic, provide a snippet of this ongoing story and insight into where some of our community stands one year after our world completely changed. We’ve done what we can to give these stories the justice and honor they deserve.

It’s our hope that these pages are a call to action, to continue the important conversations and to ask each other, “Are you OK?”

Editor’s note

BY | MADELEINE CARR
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Pepperdine experiences 48 hours of horror

BY | MARIA VALENTE

(Originally published in November 2018)

From the late hours of Nov. 7 to the early morning of Nov. 10, the Pepperdine community experienced the back-to-back traumas of the Borderline Shooting and the Woolsey Fire. Each hour brought more news and updates that students ravenously searched for, as they were confused without verifiable information at times.

This is an hour-by-hour timeline of the roughly 48 hours during which Pepperdine mourned, sheltered and prayed.

11/7/18

11:20 P.M.
Call of shots fired at the Borderline Bar and Grill.

11:20 P.M.
Pepperdine Public Relations confirms active shooter in email. Classes to meet as scheduled.

5:16 A.M.
Pepperdine Public Relations confirms active shooter in email. Classes to meet as scheduled.

5:23 A.M.
Shooter and weapon identified. Confirmed fatalities rise to 13.

8:18 A.M.
Pepperdine Public Relations releases second email. Stauffer Chapel is open all day for community to mourn.

NOON
Freshman Alaina Housley is confirmed dead to Pepperdine community by President Andrew K. Benton at a prayer service in Smothers Theatre.

3:02 P.M.
Authorities in Camarillo Springs area order mandatory evacuations.

3:58 P.M.
Pepperdine Public Relations issues statement detailing 101 closure: closed in both directions from Ventura Park through Santa Rosa.

4:26 - 5:44 P.M.
Cities of Calabasas and Agoura Hills issue voluntary evacuations, suggesting evacuees head south toward Los Angeles.

7:40 P.M.
Authorities announce mandatory evacuations for residents in Calabasas, Agoura Hills and Hidden Hills.

10:28 P.M.
Malibu Canyon Apartments in Calabasas orders mandatory evacuation of residents (several of which are Pepperdine students).
4:39 A.M.
Pepperdine Malibu and Calabasas campuses cancel classes due to proximity of Woolsey Fire.

7:07 A.M.
Malibu campus initiates shelter-in-place protocol, administrators call students to move to Firestone Fieldhouse and Tyler Campus Center.

10:13 A.M.
City of Malibu issues mandatory evacuation of entire city, including areas south of the 101 freeway, from Ventura County line to Malibu Canyon Road.

12:12 P.M.
Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) closes in westbound direction from Webb Way to city limits.

12:34 P.M.
Pepperdine releases students from shelter-in-place and allows them to return to their dorms.

1:12 P.M.
PCH opens all lanes eastbound for evacuees.

2:11 P.M.
Pepperdine reinstates shelter-in-place and calls students to return to shelter locations.

4:25 P.M.
Fire shifts southwest toward coast, not directly impacting Malibu campus.

6:03 P.M.
Students move from Firestone Fieldhouse to Payson Library. Students in Tyler Campus Center remain sheltered in place there or move to library. Shelter-in-place protocol extends to morning.

12:10 A.M.
Fire is on Malibu campus hillsides. LAPD fights fire from campus.

1:55 A.M.
Flames begin to intrude onto campus, but no permanent structures have been lost. Firefighters continue to fight fire from campus.

10:28 A.M.
Pepperdine cancels classes on Malibu and Calabasas campuses through Thanksgiving holiday.

8:03 A.M.
All on-campus fires are extinguished, and shelter-in-place policy is lifted. Pepperdine cancels classes at the Malibu and Calabasas campuses and closes campuses for remainder of the day.

11:08 A.M.
Pepperdine cancels classes from Nov. 11 through Nov. 13 on Malibu and Calabasas campuses.
An array of artwork and photos influenced by the Woolsey Fire greet visitors as they walk into Malibu City Hall. Artwork ranging from sculptures, paintings and multimedia pieces cover the first and second floors of the building.

Inspired by other works such as Robert Kerbeck’s LA Times op-ed, “My Malibu house made it through the fire. I nearly didn’t,” and upcoming book “Malibu Burning,” the Malibu community came together to express their experiences during the Woolsey Fire through the creation of an art exhibition. The Malibu Cultural Arts Commission requested local artists and other creatives to submit art pieces for the collaborative community art exhibition “Radical Beauty, Malibu Rising.”

“It was a chance for the arts commission to be a bridge between the city and the citizens of Malibu,” Veronica Brady, chair of the Malibu Arts Commission, said. “I think art is [one of the best] ways sometimes to relieve people of a trauma that is persistent.”

Brady said when the Cultural Arts Commission sought out artists for art pieces, the commission received hundreds of submissions. Because of the overwhelming response from local artists and the Malibu community, the commission decided to have two instal-
The first installation occurred in May and the second installation opened in September and will run through December. The community art exhibition is housed in Malibu City Hall and features over 70 artists.

“[‘Radical Beauty, Malibu Rising’] is an opportunity for the community to come together and reflect on the entire phenomenon of the Woolsey Fire,” said Karen Farrer, mayor of Malibu. “[The Woolsey Fire] was the largest fire in the history of Los Angeles County, and the largest one in memory for anyone who lives here in Malibu.”

Fueled by powerful gusts of winds, the Woolsey Fire spread throughout Ventura County and eventually made its way to Malibu in early November 2018. The effects of the fire were catastrophic, leaving many residents displaced and emotionally distraught.

“The impact of the Woolsey Fire doesn’t seem to really go away yet, and I don’t think it will for a while,” Malibu council member and Pepperdine alumnus Skylar Peak (2006) said.

In efforts to shed light on the tragedy that ensued and allow community members to express themselves through art, the Malibu Cultural Arts Commission curated the art exhibition.

“Lots of people were inspired either by what they lost or what they created from the remnants of their homes and studios,” Brady said, “People get dispersed after the fire; they get relocated, and they don’t see their neighbors; they don’t see their friends, so we felt that bringing people together in this way would be effective both artistically and emotionally.”

Currently, at city hall, the second installing of “Radical Beauty, Malibu Rising” is on display. On the second floor of one of the main entrances, visitors can see a line of glossy photographs displayed on the wall. As visitors descend to the lower level of City Hall, they can see numerous works of art ranging from three-dimensional sculptures, poetry, paintings and other forms of artwork.

Farrer said all the artwork on display moved her, but the many photographs in particular had a great impact on her.

“I look at some of the pictures and I know those houses. They’re houses I’ve been in,” Farrer said. “It’s very personal. Malibu is a small community. It’s famous, and it seems bigger, but it’s a small town.”

Brady said she felt a similar attachment and appreciation for the photographs on display.

“People had to be all the things that they could be for their neighbors, providing water and food and shelter and community and relief, and I love those photos,” Brady said. “I love when you see people helping each other in those circumstances.”

Peak said the art piece of the fireman on a ladder stood out to him in particular because he thought it powerfully expressed an experience from the Woolsey Fire through art.

The piece “Hot Shot” which includes a variety of vibrant colors using an abstract design and template, depicts a fireman climbing a ladder. With a black background, the colorful fireman stands out against the perceived darkness of the smoky fire.

He also said he thought the artifacts and pieces that included burned objects effectively show the extent of the destruction the fire left behind.

Farrer said the exhibition in its entirety is powerful and has significantly impacted the community as a whole.

“It was a chance for the community to come together, be with each other, express their feelings through art, in many different forms, in many different media, and share their feelings, everything from grief and loss to hope and regeneration,” Farrer said.

Brady said she encourages people to go to the second installation of the exhibition.

The Woolsey Fire exhibition is open to the public Monday through Friday at Malibu City Hall until the end of the year. With the anniversary of Woolsey Fire approaching, visiting the exhibition serves as a way for people to reflect, process and come together as a community.

“In the second wave of the exhibition, we chose things that were also about growth and regrowth and seeing a small flower coming out of the burned ashes,” Brady said. “We chose to look at some of the artwork that people created something beautiful out of the ashes.”
One year into Alaina’s Voice with father and co-founder, Arik Housley

BY | CHANNA STEINMETZ

“Kindness. We know it’s a simple message, but sometimes simple is elegant, or better in that sense.”

Arik Housley, father of Alaina Housley, created the Alaina’s Voice Foundation with his wife, Hannah, shortly after their daughter’s death. Alaina was one of the 12 victims in the Borderline Bar and Grill shooting on the night of Nov. 7, 2018. When Arik, Hannah and Alaina’s younger brother, Alex, decided on the mission and vision of Alaina’s Voice, Arik said becoming a positive change in the world just made sense.

“Our mission is to inspire hope and kindness through everyday actions, music, education and mental health initiatives,” Arik said. “Alaina’s Voice is a bit different because we’re really not asking for gun laws. We’re just asking the world’s leaders, especially America’s leaders, to sit down and say, ‘This is enough.’”

Within the past year, Alaina’s Voice has manifested its motto, “Voice of song, Voice of strength, Voice of spirit, Voice of change.”

While at Pepperdine her freshman year, Alaina was an active member of the choir; she also played piano, ukulele, violin and guitar, making music a significant part of her life, Arik said. This past October, BottleRock Napa Valley held a benefit concert starring Michael Franti and Spearhead.

“CEO of BottleRock David Graham said, ‘We want to do an event and Michael Franti would be a great performer for this message on positive change,’” Arik said. “CEO of BottleRock David Graham said, ‘We want to do an event and Michael Franti would be a great performer for this message on positive change.’”

Michael Franti is not the only artist who has been inspired by the tragic events. On the one-year anniversary of the Borderline shooting, singer-songwriter Skylar Grey will release a song dedicated to Alaina.

“I met with Skylar a few times because she’s the fiancée of Pepperdine graduate [Elliott Taylor],” Arik said. “I told her that I had all these lyrics going through my head, but I’m not a songwriter. She later sent me a pretty amazing email on how she had no intentions to write a song until she woke up the next day, and it just started happening naturally. After the first verse, she realized the song was for Alaina.”

Skylar’s angelic lyrics and melody honor Alaina who was “calling on the phone just yesterday, but is calling from the Heavens now.” All the revenue from the downloads will go to Alaina’s Voice.

Napa soccer team Napa Valley 1839 FC has also played a role in supporting Alaina’s Voice. Arik, who owns the sports team, said that when TIME Magazine released their August cover of all the cities exposed to massing shootings, it truly hit him.

“I contacted our designer, Chris Payne, and he created a jersey for us,” Arik said. “It has the 12 victims of Borderline and the three victims from the
veterans' home shooting in Napa Valley, as well as he handwrote every single city that there's been a shooting in since we started the team in 2017."

The orange tag on the bottom of the jersey is a call to action for politicians to discuss gun violence and fight for a future free of these tragedies. Jerseys can be purchased on the Napa Valley 1839 FC's website, napavalley1839.com, and all proceeds go toward Alaina’s Voice.

In January of 2019, Arik and Hannah Housley shared that they hoped to be advocates for mental health reform and provide scholarships in Alaina’s honor. Less than a year later, they said they have accomplished those goals.

Alaina’s Voice gave its first grant to a local, peer-support program for Alaina’s high school, Vintage High School in Napa Valley.

“They didn’t have enough counseling hours to be able to really serve the kids,” Arik said. “We’re trying to implement programs that promote more hours, so that kids can receive the counseling support they need. They’re the adults of tomorrow.”

If successful, Arik said Alaina’s Voice would like to provide the grant for the other three high schools in Napa Valley in the future. The foundation has been able to fund scholarships for both Vintage High School and Napa High School.

“The criteria we choose matches what Alaina represented,” Arik said. “She was interested in academics, music, athletics and service. We don’t expect everyone to be really involved in all those areas, but it provides the opportunity for others to know what we are looking for.”

For Arik, he said the emotions of the loss of his daughter still come in waves, but Alaina’s Voice has given him something to hope for.

“If this just helps one family to not bear the burden that we’ve taken on, then it’s already been successful. It’s about creating positive change,” Arik said.

Some acts of kindness are small — a simple pay-it-forward. Arik said he often likes to buy coffee for the person behind him in line, an action that can spark a chain of kindness. He also pushes for face-to-face interaction.

“I’m still a firm advocate that I think that people need to put their phones down a little bit more and actually interact,” Arik said. “It’s that interaction that makes it more human, and it shows people that someone cares. Sometimes it’s something really small like that.”

Throughout everything he has been through, Arik said he and his family do not ask, “Why?” Alaina was with close family friends and Pepperdine faculty family Chris and Amy Doran before leaving for Borderline. Arik added that part of his ability to accept what happened was knowing she was surrounded by people who cared for her.

“We continue to say that Alaina was in the right place at the right time; she just so happened to be there when evil walked in,” Arik said. “We try not to go down the road of ‘why?’ Because nothing will bring her back ... I couldn’t pray that night that it was someone else’s child. Her friends were there with her. If it wasn’t Alaina, it would be somebody else."

Arik said he and his family meet a lot of people who don’t know what to say. Having a loss for words is not something to fear.

“My advice if you know anybody in grief is, it’s OK not to say anything. Just go up and smile or give someone a hug. That’s plenty.”

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This is what it was like to feel helpless when your home is going through tragedy.
When the Borderline Shooting and Woolsey Fire happened, I was studying abroad in Florence, Italy.

I was in Morocco for my travel break, a time of fun and relaxation. But when the shooting and fire happened, our vacation fell apart.

When the news of the shooting broke, it was 2 a.m. in California and 10 a.m. in Morocco. I remember being unsure and scared because I had no confirmation if my friends were safe. I knew my friends had never gone to Borderline, but what if that night was the first night they had?

Later in the day, my friends back in Malibu began texting me about a fire coming toward campus. Being in the Sahara Desert at the time, I had little-to-no service, so it was hard to stay up-to-date with the news. I only received service every seven-to-eight hours. Between each time my phone had service, my mind went all over the place.

I felt so guilty. I was on vacation when everything happened. My second home was going through an extremely hard time while I was having fun exploring Morocco.

I sat under the clearest night sky with some of the other girls on the tour. I saw 50 shooting stars just in those three hours. While I was making wishes, my friends were watching from the windows of Payson Library as a fire blazed along the hills of Pepperdine.

Many other Pepperdine abroad students felt similarly. They said they felt helpless. I wrote an article for the Graphic on Nov. 25, about abroad students’ reactions to the Borderline Shooting and Woolsey Fire.

Returning to campus this year left me feeling nervous and insecure.

How do I talk to people about the shooting and fire? How do I navigate relationships with friends who were in Malibu for the tragedies?

At first, it was a taboo subject. Eventually, we were able to talk about it, and hearing each of their stories was sobering. My friends told me the fear they felt and the uncertainty surrounding their survival. They described the chaos of the days leading up to the evacuation and then the numb feeling on campus once everyone returned.

Though my friends have been supportive, there have been people who are less receptive to hearing my perspective on the tragedies.

People have joked that I did not experience the tragedies because I was abroad. That is partly true. I was not physically there for the shooting and fire, but I did live through it.

Just because I was abroad does not invalidate my feelings or my experience.

I watched as my Twitter feed turned into updates on the fire easing its way to campus. I tried my best to stay calm when I talked with my friends back in Malibu as we were both in the dark about their safety. Each time I talked to them, I left with the uneasy feeling of knowing that could be the last time I would ever talk to them.

I arranged a worship service in the Florence villa to comfort my peers studying abroad in Florence with me so we could grieve together. This service was different than our normal ones. This one was quiet. People sang to the worship music with tears running down their cheeks.

I felt the weight of guilt on my shoulders as I sobbed under the stars.

“Yes, the abroad campuses are isolated from the Malibu campus, but we are still a part of the Pepperdine community. When our community was hurting, we also hurt, and people may have forgotten that.”

This abroad community is still healing, too. Do not leave us out of the conversation. We are here to support everyone, but we also need support.

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As I write this, I am sitting in the back corner of the library near the fireplace in one of the chairs where I slept during the shelter-in-place last year. Looking out the window, the view is hazy, obscured by smoke from another brush fire. I’m wearing a mask again, and other students around me are doing the same. Missing from the scene are the blankets, makeshift beds and pajama-clad individuals. The restless atmosphere, though noticeably lessened, returns at times like these.

We’re now at the one-year anniversary, and our campus has changed.

Out of those on the Malibu campus, the senior class as a whole has experienced more trauma than any other. Those who were first-years are mostly studying abroad; those who were sophomores were abroad last November; and those who were seniors have graduated. Last year’s junior class is the one that remains on campus for the memorial, just as we did last year.

As one of the current seniors who stayed until the end of the November weekend that capped off the week of shooting and smoke, I’m glad to still be here in Malibu as a member of the Pepperdine student body while we remember what happened. Though my class has experienced these events in different ways, we all have that foundational experience of waking up to worried texts and voicemails about the shooting and, the next day, having our alarm clocks turn to calls to evacuate or shelter-in-place.

Even though we each react and process these tragedies in our own ways, we have a similar understanding from a specific standpoint that allows us to connect in a way that I can’t with others outside of this university. We think of the tragedies in terms of Pepperdine and the community, a source of both hurt and comfort the senior class will soon be leaving.

When those who were studying in Malibu think back to last year, we conjure specific images and emotions that parents, friends at home and other family members can’t picture. I share a bond with the group I spent the fire with in Payson that will never break.

We played board games, helped each other through panic attacks and stayed close while we ate ice cream and updated our parents. We watched through the windows as flames crested the hill, were doused by helicopters and sparked again on other hilltops. Together, we checked on other friends in the Caf to make sure they were OK and found out any more information we could.

When I went home to Chicago for that Thanksgiving holiday, my Payson friends and I were there for each other through texting and FaceTime calls in a way that those physically present at that time could have never been. In those two weeks, I had deep conversations over text with people I barely knew, but we had spent that Friday night in the library and swapped numbers.

These events changed me as well as campus culture here in Malibu.

Even though it has been a year since the fire and the shooting affected our community, the trauma still lingers. I received frantic texts during the Sweetwater Fire from friends who panicked from the plumes of smoke. The ashy air from the Wendy Fire during Waves Weekend made me want to curl up inside myself and made others’ eyes water from more than just the air quality. People experience trauma in different ways, and many who experienced Borderline and Woolsey, as well as Pepperdine itself, will continue to feel the effects for years.

As the senior class prepares for life after graduation, we will carry these memories with us, both of the traumatic events and of the community healing. Even after we graduate, we will be connected through these shared experiences during our time at Pepperdine.
First responders honored for one-year anniversary of Malibu tragedies at Women’s Soccer game

BY | ALI LEVENS & AUSTIN HALL
“Come on, Pepp, remember who we’re playing for — let’s go!”

Those were the words sophomore Trinity Watson said in the 20th minute of the Women’s Soccer home game versus Pacific University on Oct. 26.

During halftime, the Pepperdine soccer team celebrated the first responders from last November’s tragedies. Woolsey Fire responders from Station 88 in Malibu, Alex Abdalla and Mike Rivera, attempted to score goals to commemorate their heroic actions one year later.

“We’re honored that you guys have us over here,” said Rivera, who spent 14 days fighting the fire. “The public here has been receptive with us and warm, so we appreciate that. You know we’re always here to help you guys do anything we can. We do appreciate it.”

All first responders received free admission to the game, as well as a special “Team 27” patch for the number of fire engines sent out during the first hour of the Woolsey flames, according to the LA Times.

Abdalla was at the station the day the Woolsey Fire began, which was also the same day as the Borderline Shooting, and ended up serving six consecutive days to combat it.

“You never forget something like that,” Abdalla said. “It’s definitely something that is on my mind, and the healing process is going to be long. It’s one year later, but at the same time, it’s fresh in everybody’s minds, and the best thing we can do to help is prevent something like that from happening again.”

The healing process of serving in a tragedy is difficult, as seven to twenty-seven percent of firefighters meet the requirements for having PTSD, according to verywellmind.com.

“There’re certain things that affect me more than others, but luckily we have the guys we work with, we talk about it,” Rivera said. “[We] talk about it in the rig, and we talk about it when we get back. We also have certain phone numbers that we can contact that specialize in that. We can have resources to help us do this, but mainly it’s just between us. We talked about it and feel better and help each other through it.”

While the first responders said they are in the healing process, the players on the soccer team said they believed it was important to compete for those who risked their lives to help the community.

“It was all in the back of our minds that we were playing for people who fought for the campus and saved so much of it, including our own field,” sophomore Isabel Nelson said.

The soccer team dedicated the entire 2019 season to the first responders during the game.

“Just to have an opportunity to say thank you was great, cause it’s been in our hearts all year,” Head Coach Tim Ward said. “Our girls were really moved and affected by what happened a year ago.”

Fighting fires is a complex and challenging occupation, as firefighters can get severe burns, can be injured from falling structures and are prone to lifelong health problems from being around smoke, according to work.chron.com. As dangerous as it is, both Abdalla and Rivera said they are proud of what they do to help those in need.

 “[Being a first responder has] been real rewarding just because on any given day, anything can happen,” Rivera said. “It’s when people have a crisis, and that’s the biggest crisis in their life that they’ve had, and for us to be able to go there and help mitigate the problem, put them at ease, and that’s real comforting to be able to do that.”

Responding to tragedy is best overcome by banding together and comforting one another, Rivera said.

“Things do get better, things will get better,” Abdalla said. “The human body is very resilient and people are strong. Being able to come together as a community, that’s the most important thing to help with the growth factor.”

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Students respond to memorial events

BY | ALEX NEIS

One year after the Borderline Shooting and the Woolsey Fire, Student Affairs planned events to help the community along in the healing process. While some students said they appreciate these opportunities, others choose to process alone.

“I will absolutely attend the events,” junior Kara Tyler said. “I know for some students, this is a super rough subject and even if they can’t attend because of that, I suspect they will be thankful to have the opportunity, whether or not they utilize it.”

Wednesday Chapel on Nov. 6 will include prayer and silence in remembrance of each tragedy. In addition, speakers will focus on resilience and provide guidance through times of tragedy. This chapel will be recorded and made available to students on all international campuses via livestream. Students on all international campuses can watch this chapel via livestream.

Stauffer Chapel will be open Nov. 7 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a time of prayer and remembrance. At 4:30 p.m., the Housley family will join members of the community in the Thornton Administrative Center for the dedication of an olive tree planted in Alaina’s honor. The ceremony will include scripture reading, a prayer led by President Jim Gash and music from the Pepperdine concert choir.

“I think events like prayer ceremonies are important to provide healing to a community that has suffered through tragedies,” Tyler said. “For me, that’s something that’s very comforting to have available.”

Following the tree dedication, SGA President Meredith McCune and former SGA President Arik Housley will host a dinner at the Waves Cafe to raise awareness of Alaina’s Voice, an organization founded in Alaina’s memory that seeks to create positive change in communities through education, music and mental health initiatives.

On Nov. 8, the Pepperdine RISE (Resilience-Informed Skills Education) will host Hope Forward Day. The day will start with Sacred Yoga at 9 a.m. on the Sandbar patio and Celebration Chapel at 10 a.m. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the Adamson Plaza, a Hope Forward wellness fair will offer students resources and information on topics including spiritual practices, psycho-education, healthy habits, exercise, arts and service projects. At the fair, all will be invited to create a canvas patch to be added to a commemorative art piece titled “The Hope Forward Quilt of Care.”

Connie Horton, vice president for Student Affairs, wrote in an email that Student Affairs worked with academic professionals and input from students to plan the events. Horton wrote that Hope Forward Day is about remembering and grieving the difficulties and loss of the past and looking forward with hope.

“RISE is about resilience — bouncing back, recovering from, even growing from difficult or traumatic life experiences,” Horton wrote. “The Borderline shooting and Woolsey Fire are extreme examples. RISE is also about helping students learn to bounce back from more day-to-day challenges as well.”

The series of events will end with a hike to the cross at 3 p.m. and a sunset prayer.

Senior Reilly Phillips said while remembering the tragedies of the past year can be difficult, it is important for our community to keep them in mind.

“Something so terrible and horrifying is sometimes hard to relive,” Phillips said. “But I also think it’s important to honor and remember the people who were affected.”

While Phillips said he doesn’t plan on attending the events himself, he appreciates their value for many in the community who process their emotions best among other people.

“I don’t plan on going,” Phillips said. “I am a fifth-year senior and don’t feel super connected to the campus. I also struggle with being in large groups of people while I’m upset or sad. It’s hard for me to express how I feel in those situations, but I think it’s a good thing for people who feel more comfortable with that.”

Senior Carolina French said while she appreciates the university’s response, the response of particular professors has impacted her the most.

“Dr. Folkerts did an amazing job last year of speaking of important events that have happened in Pepperdine’s history
and across the world,” French said. “For example, he spoke in
depth about the fire and the murder of a student at the begin-
ing of the semester in spring of 2019.”

For students like graduate student Hudson Casiple, the uni-
versity’s involvement in the healing process has been largely
unsatisfactory, even preventing him from making progress in
his own emotional wellbeing, he said.

“I think the university has all too often placed the trauma
of last year’s events at the center of campus life and this has
been a roadblock to healing,” Casiple said. “My counselor told
me once that families have the unhealthy tendency to center
themselves around their greatest source of trauma. I do not
consider this to be much different.”

Casiple said his main problem with the university’s posi-
tion is in their use of the word resilience. He said the univer-
sity is holding students back from moving on for the sake of
promoting resilience but they don’t understand exactly what
resilience means.

“The ‘resilience’ they promote is not true resilience,” Casi-
ple said. “True resilience is literally the ability to return to life
as normal.”

Although he has his issues with the university’s response
to tragedy, Casiple said he thinks the university has good in-
tentions and is probably helping certain people heal.

“I am sure that the university’s response to trauma has been
adequate for those who were more deeply impacted than I
was by last year’s events, and that is certainly more important
than my minor disagreements,” Casiple said.

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Memorial Events Schedule

11/6
10 A.M. | FIRESTONE FIELDHOUSE
Wednesday Chapel prayer and moment of silence, followed by a panel of experts on resilience during hardships.

11/7
10 A.M. - 2 P.M. | STAUFFER CHAPEL
The chapel will be open for individual prayer/remembrance.

4:30 P.M. | 1ST FLOOR TAC LOBBY
Tree dedication to Alaina with her family.

5 P.M. | WAVES CAFE
Dinner with SGA and Arik Housley to raise awareness for Alaina’s Voice.

11/8
9 A.M. | SANDBAR PATIO
Sacred Yoga

10 A.M. | AMPHITHEATRE
Celebration Chapel with Jim Gash as speaker.

11 A.M. - 2 P.M. | ADAMSON PLAZA
Hope Forward wellness fair with booths and food trucks.

3 P.M.
Hike to the cross and sunset prayer.
Seven-eighths: A Year without Alaina

BY | ASHLEY MOWREADER
My suitemates are tough people to get in contact with, and that was before we lived in six different cities across five time zones.

My DeBell F Suite was born spring of 2018, a product of Pepperdine housing and the extensive planning of eight overly excited Regents’ Scholars. Once on campus, the eight of us — Haley Brouwer, Pari Cribbins, Lauren Drake, Bridget Johnson, Alaina Housley, Zoe Walsh, Alicia Yu and I — quickly became fast friends, doing everything together.

When asked to describe our dynamic in one word, Alicia and Pari said “energetic.” Bridget said “courageous.” I said “a hot mess.” But the word that kept coming up was “family.”

“We love each other,” Lauren said. “We fight, we want different things [and] we might not see each other for a while, but there is a deeper kind of love there that’s deeper than the relationships you have with other people.”

Nov. 7, Alicia and Alaina went to Borderline Bar and Grill for college night. That night, Alaina died in the mass shooting that took place at Borderline. That night, our bond was tested and we really began to understand what it means to be a family.

In November 2018, we published an article in the Graphic’s special edition “In the Midst” titled “Alaina, One-Eighth of Us” in which we reflected on who Alaina was to us, our time with her, and how we want the Pepperdine community and beyond to remember her.

For the one-year anniversary of her death, we knew we wanted to publish something new. So over the past month, for an hour or so at a time, I’ve settled into an empty classroom in Casa Olleros in Buenos Aires to call one of my roommates around the world and dig into what it means to be one-eighth of Alaina’s DeBell F suite.

Living the Suite Life

Although we quickly became best friends, we were strangers first. Remembering the beginning of freshman year resurfaces stories of shared bathrooms, tea, photo-shoots and memories.

“I associate my first semester a lot more with going to the Getty Villa, going shopping and going off campus a lot more,” Pari said. “In terms of suite dynamics, it felt like one of the movies where we tried on each other’s clothes and ‘surprise, surprise,’ some of us got lice!”

(For the record, the lice thing was settled within the week, though it did cause a lot of tension.)

I think it surprised each of us how natural it felt to be together. It felt like we’d found our people.

“I’ve been searching for a consistent friend group for a long time and I’ve found that with the suite,” Alicia said. “I think from Move-in Day to Nov. 7, those were the happiest times in my life and it’s because of the suite.”

Becoming Friends with Grief

Our relationship immediately developed and deepened following Alaina’s death. Alaina was the first close friend any of us had lost, and the unusual circumstances added to the chaos of grief and coping.

 “[Alaina’s death] was very complicated in a way that I don’t think any of us had ever experienced before,” Alicia said. “First of all, she was very young. Second, no one
thought it was going to happen when we went out. Third, it was murder. It was someone we had only known in person for two and a half months, but we knew her very well.”

Grief hit us all very differently. Many of us struggled with our mental health, including depression, anxiety and panic attacks. Other symptoms of grief were more physical, like extreme bursts of anger, the inability to eat for extended periods of time, the inability to get out of bed or creating distance from the suite as a whole.

“There were times I felt physically sick,” Haley said. “When I started to feel myself move through the grief, guilt was a big thing for me. I would feel guilty when I didn’t think about her enough or remember her enough. That was one of the hardest parts of grief — accepting that I was starting to be OK but she never would be.”

While it is hard to grieve as an individual, living in close proximity with those who had also experienced the same loss magnified our emotions. The weeks we were back on campus post-Thanksgiving break and before Christmas break were the hardest time for us as a group. We were unable to take care of ourselves or each other.

“I went back to school and things got worse,” Zoe said. “I was able to run away to my home. I still had those negative emotions but I didn’t have to confront the tragedy of reality ... But when I got back to school it was really bad. I didn’t exactly know who to turn to because who I usually would turn to was my suitmates.”

Personally, the week immediately coming back to campus was the hardest week. When we returned to our suite, the majority of Alaina’s belongings were still in her and Lauren’s room.

Over Thanksgiving break, Lauren and I decided I would move into her room, but I was unable to do so for days as Pepperdine encouraged us to go through Alaina’s things, pull out mementos and document what items we took for Alaina’s parents, Arik and Hannah Housley. I moved in on Nov. 28, the day of Alaina’s funeral.

Social Media

Our grief was also very public. Social media played a large role in spreading information about Borderline and especially about Alaina. Whether from the tragedy of a mass shooting, the prominence of a famous relative or a combination of both, Alaina’s Instagram blew up after her death. Thousands of likes and comments appeared on her latest posts, strangers followed her account and ours, sending DMs of sympathy, well wishes and the incredibly insulting, “Did you know her?”

“The sheer number of strangers who followed me because they wanted something to do with the tragedy and DMed me — it wasn’t anywhere close to what Alicia or Lauren got but it was nauseating,” Pari said.

Alicia had shared a photo of her and Alaina at Borderline on her Instagram story and tagged Borderline, which resulted in dozens of people messaging her. Each of us had a surge of followers or follow requests on Instagram, but Lauren and Alicia the most.

“I have never hated being a person living in this age today more than I did at that time,” Lauren said. “[I received] over 500 follow requests on my page because I was tagged in a good amount of Alaina’s posts.”

I also experienced a flood of followers on Twitter after tweeting about Alaina being missing early Nov. 8. My tweet was shared by thousands of people, including Alaina’s famous aunt, “Sister, Sister” star Tamera Mowry-Housley.

Grieving on social media was unfamiliar territory, and there didn’t seem to be a right answer.

“I didn’t know how to approach it,” Haley said. “Immediately after was the hardest, and for the month or so after, I didn’t know what to do with it. I did end up doing a story on Instagram about her, but in the time after I wasn’t sure if it was something I should continue to address.”

Most, if not all, of us took a break from social media following the shooting, hoping to get some distance from the event and the overwhelming interest from the public and the news media.

“I preferred to keep off of social media regarding that subject in Novem-
ber,” Zoe said. “I just wanted my grief to be personal and private. I didn’t feel comfortable posting on social media. I wanted to keep it to myself and figure it out.”

**Pepperdine and the Suite**

Our suite’s notoriety continued on Pepperdine’s campus but in a different way. Instead of being confronted head-on with a barrage of messages, it seemed like everyone knew who we were but no one wanted to say anything.

I experienced this first-hand after Alaina’s memorial service. We all participated in the service, Lauren through song and the rest of us through reading Psalm 23. I went to intramural volleyball that evening where I worked as a referee, and I could feel the recognition and pity focused on me like laser beams. But no one said anything. I can’t blame them. What do you say to that?

“Speaking at the service, a lot of people were at that service,” Bridget said. “And a lot of people, right afterward, they knew that you knew Alaina or that you were friends with her because they saw you at that. Even like professors and stuff now know.”

Meeting new people brings its own set of problems as well. Haley, Pari, Alicia, Zoe and I are studying abroad with a new group of people, and Lauren and Bridget are living and interacting with a completely new group of people on the Malibu campus.

“It’s so hard, especially when you meet new people, like going abroad and stuff,” Alicia said. “For us, it’s something that’s a part of our lives now. It’s a big deal, but it’s not like every time we talk about it the ground shakes. It’s hard to share with someone while bracing for the way they’re going to react.”

There’s also trepidation in how much a person knows. We’ve been very public about our relationship to Alaina, but that’s no guarantee a peer or teacher understands our hurt. I find myself having conversations just trying to gauge whether or not this person is aware of my trauma.

“There are times in situations that it will come up or something similar will come up and I just feel kind of outside of it because I don’t know if people know how I was involved in that and it’s hard to explain it,” Haley said.

While we feel the need to tiptoe around sensitive topics when talking to some, others want to bypass the conversation entirely.

“People avoid the conversation and that’s a little interesting,” Bridget said. “I don’t have an issue talking about it, but people perceive that we might not want to talk about it, but I don’t think that’s something they need to do.”

**Remembering Alaina**

Alaina’s name carries a different kind of notoriety on campus. To mention Alaina Housley is loaded with Borderline, gun violence and Alaina’s Voice non-profit instead of the person she was during her life.

“I didn’t particularly enjoy the way that Alaina’s memory got simplified so that it could be understood by the masses,” Zoe said. “She just became this idea instead of a person. Pepperdine had to package the tragedy that made sense to students who weren’t connected to her, to alumni, etc. They had to grieve her really publicly as an organization that didn’t know her personally, but they had to still issue statements and figure out a way to present her memory.”

Alaina seemed to be diminished to the best parts of herself—kind, understanding and musical. But to reduce her to these things forgets so much of who
she was.

"I feel we talk about the fact that she's kind a lot, [but] I don't want to forget her humor," Haley said. "Because some of the jokes she made, and the side comments and the sarcasm and the little things, I think that defined a lot of my relationship with her because that's somewhere where we connected."

For us, Alaina's memory is found in Coffee Bean blended dark chocolate mochas, StarKid musicals, Mason jars of Modge Podge, two-piece pajama sets and especially our 21st Night of September party celebrating the song “September” by Earth, Wind and Fire.

“When I think of memories with Alaina, [Sept. 21] comes up first,” Alicia said. “It was just a night where we did dumb stuff for the sake of doing dumb stuff. A lot of the memories I had with her were just doing things to enjoy each other's presence.”

She was also very intentional with people and generous with her time. “Living in Alaina's legacy is doing everything with the same intention and passion that she had,” Bridget said. “She seemed like somebody who really tried to make the most of life ... and enjoying what she did while she did it.”

**One Year Later**

Nov. 7 is the one-year anniversary of Borderline, and it brings up a lot of different emotions including bewilderment, internal and external pressure, sadness and heaviness.

“I just can’t believe it’s been a year,” Pari said. “It really just strikes me that Nov. 8 is barely into the school year. I don’t think that hit me as much until looking back on it.”

Throughout the past year, the seventh day of each month has marked one more month without Alaina. These anniversaries prompted emotional reactions, especially in the sixth month, but the one year feels different.

“I know it’s going to be hard, whatever this day brings,” Lauren said. “There's gonna be tears, there's gonna be grief, there's gonna be sadness. [I'll be] missing [our suite] so much; that's gonna be the worst part.”

Pepperdine has made an effort to remember Borderline and Alaina for the one year. Florence is dedicating a tree and holding a memorial service. Lausanne and Buenos Aires are hosting open-mic coffee houses to honor Alaina and her love of music.

The one year holds a special weight I can’t put my finger on. It's a pressure to remember her and almost a justifica-
tion to grieve again. With Alaina's fame there's also an external pressure to re-share or remember her so she's remembered. But I'm also terrified of the reality that after one year, people may not care. This will probably be the last time Pepperdine publicly grieves Alaina, and I don't know how to feel about that.

"Honestly, I constantly think about [the anniversary] and how I think it'll pan out or how I want it to pan out," Alicia said. "I feel like people have forgotten a lot, but I feel like the anniversary they have to remember. It does scare me that this is like a pivotal moment. I hope that people keep talking about it and how people talk about it will continue to evolve."

A Year of Change

This past year has changed a lot of things for the suite — physically in the form of new haircuts, tattoos and scars, spiritually in how each of us values faith but especially emotionally.

"I feel like my capacity for empathy has increased," Pari said. "I find myself being overly invested in people's lives and I give 110% to those I'm with. My approach to people has changed."

Empathy is a buzzword that defines our experiences. Taking the time to listen to those around us, investing in relationships and being able to empathize with those struggling were all things that helped us heal and in return have become goals in life.

Alaina also inspired us to live more authentically and boldly.

"I've been a lot more open on social media and I don't care about keeping up a persona," Alicia said. "I feel a lot more free to unfollow accounts that don't make me feel good about myself. Seeing how fragile life is, I want to make more meaningful use of life and of other people's time."

Alaina's loss was also an eye-opener for how dark and scary the world can be.

"I'm still struggling with the idea of the world being a place that gives good things," Zoe said. "In all these experiences, I really struggled with letting it be good. I have a lot more anxiety and I don't trust as much that things are going to be OK."

"The experience of a friend's death, being in a harsh but quick media spotlight, and finishing finals before being able to process grief sharpened us more than expected."

"I've hardened but in a good way," Lauren said. "I would never trade anything for the loss of her life, but before this experience, I was someone who always thought everything happened for a reason, who only saw the good in people and the good in the lives of people around me that led me to not be very critical."

But seeing the darkness more clearly has also illuminated silver linings in our lives. Thankfulness has become a key aspect in my and my suitemates' day to day, emphasizing things to be grateful for even when it feels like there's nothing good.

"I appreciate things more, which sounds cliché but I do," Bridget said. "I'm more thankful for the education at Pepperdine ... and having a family that cares about me and friends around me that care because sometimes we just take that so for granted. This last year has certainly shown me perseverance and that there's a plan for each of us."

For most of us, faith was an integral part in healing and finding hope through the hurt.

"[I found healing in] God, clearly," Zoe said. "He shows me ways that He can redeem these terrible, evil events in every day. He shows me how it can make me stronger. The good now doesn't erase the bad of then, but there's no point in my life that is too far away from Him or too dark or too hopeless that He won't bring good into my life again."

We also found love in our friends, our family, the community we've cultivated at Pepperdine and most certainly in each other and our love and memory of Alaina.

"I've learned to appreciate the role she played in my life," Haley said. "[I had to] accept the fact that it was limited but she was still a good person and there are so many out there who love her and care for her, and that wasn't limited to the seven other girls who lived in my suite. And at first that was an uncomfortable feeling that grew to comfort me."

For those who may connect with our story, have gone through a similar situation or are looking for their silver lining, there is hope.

Ask for help and give yourself time to heal. Bridget said.

Grief is unexpected and you can't predict the feelings you're going to have, Zoe said. Just because you've confronted death and tragedy, it doesn't mean other things in life are less important, Pari said.

You cannot control this—do not put pressure on yourself; remember that you are loved, Haley said.

You are not alone, and you have the strength to get through this, Alicia said.

This trauma, this experience, this person is not your identity, and you cannot stop living your life because someone took your friend's opportunity to live theirs, Lauren said.

And the best advice I can give you is to tell your story. It's going to be hard. It's going to hurt. But the best thing you can share is the story you've been given. I hope I've done ours justice.
ALAINA:

One Eighth Of Us

BY | HALEY BROUWER, PARI CRIBBINS, LAUREN DRAKE, BRIDGET JOHNSON, ASHLEY MOWREADER, ZOE WALSH & ALICIA YU

(Originally published Nov. 25, 2018)

Alaina meant a lot. She meant a lot as a peptide student, as a daughter, and as a sister. She meant a lot before she was a part of a senseless act of violence, "the youngest victim" in a terrible crime, or a "beautiful soul who passed away too soon." Alaina meant a lot to us because of who she was as our friend and classmate, and that's who we miss.

Alaina brought the suite together in May of 2018. Being the social butterfly and top scholar she was, she made sure she had her roommates picked out ahead of time. She was so excited to decorate - coming up with ideas & tissue paper crafts and buying her roommate Lauren and herself matching bedspreads.

Alaina was a person who jumped right into things. The first day of NSO she marched into DelFeu Coffee Bean mocha in hand, ready to take on the year. We all knew from the moment we met her that this was a girl with a big heart and a fast mouth.

She claimed to be anti-social, but her constant buzzing phone would tell you otherwise. She loved staying connected to us, even if it meant sending messages at 1 a.m. when the rest of us were asleep. As soon as you were friends with Alaina, she didn't let you go. Shafer F suite can attest to that - one My Tie date and a group chat later and Alaina became crazy close with all of those boys.

Alaina was a major mom friend. If any of us were sick or needed coffee or a snack, she was the first one to offer to help. If Lauren ever left her keys in their room, which she did often, Alaina made the trek across campus to deliver it with a smile (and a mild scolding). She was exceedingly kind even when we got on her last nerves. She loved each of us for who we are and didn't expect anything in return.

But as much as she was our mom, she was open to any and all advice we gave her. She would ask our opinions on whether or not to buy clothes online, or if she should buy another pint of ice cream or more coffee. Our advice was almost always no, at least in terms of clothes and ice cream, but she never needed our thoughts on more coffee. She was open, earnest and willing to offer her thoughts and constructive criticism, and most of the time, listened to the advice she was offered in return.

Alaina constantly made us laugh, but she laughed at herself as well. She was the first to admit that she's not always the brightest candle on the table, but that never slowed her down. She never got upset that she made a mistake, and she'd often laugh right along with us. In her own words, "I'm a little annoying a lot of the time."
She loved taking photos of the group, with or without us knowing it. You had to be careful of what you said for a bit because you never knew if it was going to end up memorialized in Alaina’s Snapchat stories or memories. But she was the one to thank for all of our great Instagram posts, because she’d be the one to stop and remind us to take a selfie.

She was a fantastic listener and was known for her willingness to be there. Whether it was boy problems, class difficulties, or family trouble, she made an effort to really listen and give any advice she could offer.

She enjoyed quality time with people, no matter what it was. She’d be the first to propose getting a midnight snack, typically a pint of Ben and Jerry’s, from the HAWC, and made sure to invite everyone. She was the first one to agree to grab a meal with you, no matter what her schedule looked like or if she was hungry or not. She would even sit with you late at night in the suite just because. She didn’t need a reason to be with you—being with you was enough.

Alaina never ran out of things to say, even when you weren’t sure why she was saying it. She was full of funny stories, silly jokes, and snarky remarks and she knew it.

Her loving, easy-going and accepting nature made her ready for any adventure, like a 4th Night of September party, a trip to the Getty Villa, Coffee Bean runs, movie nights and pizza dinners, proclaiming “Oasis is always good!”

Alaina was our friend, roommate, and sister in Christ. She was bold in how she lived and how she loved others, and we want to honor that legacy. Alaina truly cared for people, no matter who they are, and we want to continue that legacy with Alaina’s Voice.

Alaina’s Voice is a nonprofit designed to unite people of all backgrounds and beliefs to join as one against gun violence. We will not watch as victims of gun violence fade into the background, forgotten behind those who commit gun violence. Alaina’s Voice demands more, that we speak up for those who cannot and promise to remember them as more than just a name.

Just as Alaina brought the eight of us together as a suite, her voice—a voice of song, voice of strength, voice of spirit, and voice of change—has the power to bring us together in the wake of tragedy.

Alaina Maria Houkley is not just a headline. She is 1/8 of us.
A Malibu resident who lost her home in the Woolsey Fire is nearly ready to move in, yet, this is not the case for most.

When the Woolsey Fire jumped the 101 Freeway and headed toward Malibu the morning of Nov. 9, resident Laurie Brennan packed two suitcases, grabbed her two dogs and immediately left.

Ten hours later, she learned flames completely destroyed her house. The other homes around her all survived.

“I have four kids,” Brennan said. “All of their baby staff, all their memorabilia from grade school, all my family photos. I lost everything.”

Brennan had moved to her home in Paseo Canyon in Malibu West just 10 months before Woolsey hit.

“I just didn’t think the fire was gonna come this far,” Brennan said.

Now, one year later, Brennan is on track to be the first resident to completely rebuild her home in Malibu.

The Woolsey Fire destroyed 488 homes in the city last year. As residents heal and city leaders push recovery, rebuilding efforts have been a difficult and time-consuming process.

“This is generally a group of people that have never built a home before, didn’t plan on building a home,” Malibu Mayor Pro Tem Mikke Pierson said. “Even if you want to build a home and you embrace it, you’re exhausted by the end of it, and it’s really, really difficult.”

According to the city’s rebuilding statistics, no homes have been completely rebuilt. The city’s Planning Committee has approved 169 projects and has issued 31 building permits for property owners to start construction.

City leaders struck a deal with the California Coastal Commission in March to help residents quickly get building permits.

Those who apply to build a home in Malibu typically have to get coastal development permits from the commission before being able to start construction. The commission’s decision in March exempts residents who lost their homes from having to get coastal development permits and allows them to receive expedited emergency permits instead to rebuild.

“To take a two to four year process of getting a permit to start building down to less than six months is huge progress,” Pierson said.

Malibu’s Rebuilding Process

The first step in the rebuilding process requires property owners to clear debris and contaminated material from burned structures.

Brennan did not get her property cleared until January.

“That was probably the hardest part of the whole process — ... waiting for that,” Brennan said. “If it wasn’t raining, I was over here almost every weekend trying to salvage. I’d get my hazmat suit on and pick through ashes trying to find stuff.”

After debris removal, residents can then start meeting with city officials, architects, contractors and designers to prepare rebuilding plans.

“Because every home is different, not everyone runs into the same situations at all,” Pierson said. “Different kinds of houses, different parts of Malibu, dif-
 Residents can apply for one of three permits: to build their house the same size and in the same location (Like for Like Rebuild); the same location plus 10% in size (Like for Like + 10% Rebuild); or the same location with significant revisions (Major Change to Residence).

The majority of rebuilding residents, 59.4%, obtained Like for Like + 10% Rebuild permits. 35.5% of residents are doing Like for Like and 7.1% are doing Major Change to Residence.

Brennan said she submitted her rebuilding plans Dec. 26, 2018, and was the first person in Malibu to do so. Her plans were approved in March, and she was finally issued a building permit in June.

“Think about it ... it’s been five months and I almost have my house built,” Brennan said. “It took seven months just to get the permit to do it.”

As someone who has never built a home, Brennan hired an expediter to help her with the process. For Brennan, rebuilding quickly is a priority.

“I only have one year’s worth of rent money from my insurance company,” Brennan said. “So if I didn’t get the expediter moving quickly and everything, then I was gonna run out of rent.”

**Slow Progress**

However, city leaders said most property owners who lost homes in 2018 are not acting with the same urgency.

“On my street, the two houses that burned to the ground, one is being framed as we speak and they’re moving very quickly and the other one hasn’t begun any work yet,” Malibu Mayor Karen Farrer said.

“I would say those two houses on my street that are practically right across the street from each other represent the complete spectrum of what’s happening right now,” Farrer said.

Farrer and Pierson both agreed the city’s rebuilding progress depends primarily on how fast property owners decide to take action.

“Other people sit at home and we’re trying to find them and we’re doing a pretty good job, but they’re sort of waiting for someone to contact them,” Pierson said. “And that’s not the process of building a home. You gotta be really, really proactive and really detailed oriented. It’s a whole full time job.”

Pierson said he believes as many as 30% of property owners who lost their homes will not rebuild.

“There’s easy ones to see: older [homeowners],” Pierson said. “You’ve been in Malibu a long time, you’re under insured, you’re probably not rebuilding.”

Pierson and Farrer were both elected to the council two days before Woolsey burned through Malibu. They are co-chairs of the Disaster Response and Recovery Ad Hoc Committee, which works to help the city better prepare for future disasters.

Pierson and Farrer said they want Malibu residents to know that city staff is working hard to support residents as they rebuild their lives.

“I think we’ve never undertaken a rebuilding like this, so there was a learning curve and what that looked like and how to get it going,” Pierson said.

As city leaders, they said the most uplifting part of this past year has been the community’s resilient spirit.

“We’ve both been through many fires,” Farrer said. “Most people are here to stay. They’re here to help each other. We have a lot of just people who are good neighbors.”

**Moving Forward**

One year has not been nearly enough time for Malibu to recover from Woolsey’s destruction.

“[Full recovery] won’t be before three years,” Pierson said. “That’ll probably be about the time when we’re mostly complete.”

For those who lost everything, this last year has been filled with tremendous devastation and grief.

“It’s probably been the most emotional year of my life,” Brennan said.

“The things that I saved that I did pack in my suitcase, I did not unpack until April,” she said. “It took me a good six months just to be able to feel comfortable enough to take out what photos I had saved of my parents and things like that.”

Nonetheless, Brennan said she is looking to the future with hope and gratitude for the people whom she has met during her rebuilding progress.

“I can’t stress enough this community here is amazing,” Brennan said. “I have amazing stories of workers — these guys I’ve never met in my life — they’re framing my house and they’re working hard and they’re like, ‘we are so honored build your house for you.’”

Brennan said she has been renting her neighbor’s house that is right next to hers for the last year.

She expects to move into her new home in January.

“Now comes the fun part, watching the floors go in and the cabinets go in,” Brennan said. “I’m really excited about that. This is where I belong.”
Betweeen the lines:

Navigating trauma and grief as a Borderline Shooting survivor and suitemate of Alaina Housley

BY | ALICIA YU

Figuring out what my life has been, is and will be like, post-mass shooting, has felt like being trapped in a Venn diagram. Borderline survivors stand in one circle, Alaina's suitemates stand in the other circle and I stand alone in the middle. While I have supportive, close friends in both respective circles, nobody can really understand what living between those lines is like.

I'm certain we all feel lonely and isolated because nobody experiences grief or trauma the same way, but there's an inexplicable pain that comes with the knowledge that no one on any Pepperdine campus has seen what I've seen, heard what I've heard and felt what I've felt.

There's something about grief and trauma that news sources just can't capture. We see vibrant landscapes overlaid with motivational quotes. Stories get captured in this fuzzy lens that obscures the truth. Grief and trauma are not hot pink words and sparkly wallpapers. Grief and trauma are not rainbows and cartoon drawings of the sun with a big smile.

Grief and trauma are ugly, and nobody experiences grief or trauma the same way, but there's an inexplicable pain that comes with the knowledge that no one on any Pepperdine campus has seen what I've seen, heard what I've heard and felt what I've felt.

There's something about grief and trauma that news sources just can't capture. We see vibrant landscapes overlaid with motivational quotes. Stories get captured in this fuzzy lens that obscures the truth. Grief and trauma are not hot pink words and sparkly wallpapers. Grief and trauma are not rainbows and cartoon drawings of the sun with a big smile.

Grief and trauma are ugly, and nobody experiences grief or trauma the same way, but there's an inexplicable pain that comes with the knowledge that no one on any Pepperdine campus has seen what I've seen, heard what I've heard and felt what I've felt.

Grief is crying whenever I listen to the songs Alaina sang and played on her ukulele. Grief is becoming paralyzed in my steps whenever I walk by and see an empty bed and bookshelf. Grief is feeling guilty whenever I think about how Alaina was supposed to study abroad, publish a book and attend law school, knowing I get to move forward and accomplish my goals and she will not.

Trauma is lying in bed with all the energy drained the minute I wake up, wondering how I'll get up, let alone walk up to the CCB for class. Trauma is never being fully present because I'm always checking my surroundings to make sure it's safe to eat at my favorite restaurant or read a book on Zuma Beach. Trauma is waking up from nightmares and flashbacks at 4 a.m. every day and begging God to make it end forever. It's impossible to comprehend what grief and trauma are like until it hits you.

Conveying how I feel to those around me has been one of the hardest chal-
Challenges since Borderline. With friends who were not personally affected by the shooting, I struggled to analyze what our relationship would be like going forward. Many people were uncomfortable with me bringing up Borderline and Alaina, which was frustrating because it was healing for me to talk about my experiences. Many others beat around the bush, even though I was perfectly OK talking about my trauma.

The lack of authenticity in our interactions made it difficult for me to feel at home in my relationships that were formerly close. This resulted in me cutting out numerous people whom I felt could not handle my baggage, and by extension, myself. It’s easy to understand why this was a common reaction from people in my life, but it upset me that I had to put my feelings aside for their comfort when I was the one who was grieving and traumatized.

It was even hard to understand the new nuances in my interactions with those who were at the epicenter of the event. Many times, we would sugarcoat our feelings to keep from burdening one another. Other times, the directness I spoke with startled and hurt people. I still struggle to judge an environment and balance how I should speak and act. It’s frustrating to have to make all these adjustments in my daily interactions that my peers who weren’t affected by Borderline never have to think about.

This challenge has only proven harder in the past two months I’ve been abroad. I didn’t personally know the majority of the people in my program, and I also struggled to gauge how many people knew who I was or what I had been through. My and my suite’s grieving were forced into the public eye as various news sources tried to capture our story. However, it’s hard to figure out who still remembers. I read Psalm 23 at Alaina’s memorial service with my suitemates and co-wrote an article for the Graphic last year honoring her life.

It feels arrogant to expect people to remember, but it’s also frustrating to know they don’t have anything to lose by forgetting. I don’t know how blunt or sensitive I have to be in bringing up last November with my peers in Lausanne, and again, it’s a struggle to be alone in reading between the lines.

Sometimes I find myself subconsciously testing the waters and seeing who is able to show substantial amounts of compassion and listen to my story. Last November’s events have put up a barrier that prevents me from feeling as close to those in my program as I would like to, and I know I’ve hurt others because of it.

Even though there’s other Borderline Shooting survivors in Lausanne with me, I feel distant and removed from them because I spent the majority of the year grieving for Alaina with my suitemates, and it feels like everyone else who was at Borderline was able to get a head start in healing from their trauma. It’s a challenge to connect because I do not want to rouse up any negative reactions they were avoiding feeling, and I don’t know how many others feel the same way.

The most helpful thing people have done for me is simply to have empathy and understand that they can’t comprehend what I’ve experienced. Over the past year, I’ve interacted with countless people both in person and on the internet who’ve grasped for connections to Borderline and Alaina but failed to find one. Regardless of if they attended Borderline or intended to, knew anyone who did or knew Alaina well, there were many people who pretended they understood the depth of what I felt.

I’ve learned that we do not need to be at the focal point of a tragedy to have an excuse to be sad. As humans, we are saddened by tragedies because they should not have to happen to anybody, and it breaks our hearts to see the pain caused.

However, when we try to explain our sadness through a nonexistent grief, all
we do is lie to ourselves and hurt those whose grief is real. We tell those who have lost someone dear to them that they are not feeling emotions unique to their experience.

The people who are able to admit they can’t fathom the hurt I feel but try to empathize and listen to my story are those who have made me feel the most comfortable and seen. The best thing you can do to help someone through their trauma is to be patient and understanding as they navigate uncharted emotional territory and to be present to listen and hold them when they are ready to open up.

I frequently think about how unpredictable my life has been in the past year. Just a few days before Borderline, I was feeling the happiest I ever have in my life. I remember so vividly sitting on the beach, watching the most unbelievably beautiful sunset ever, with three of my suitemates.

I remember so clearly thinking about how lucky I was to go to my dream school in a beautiful beach town with the best friends I’ve always hoped for. While all those feelings and thoughts were genuine, it seems so far from what I had felt and thought for the months following.

How could I be on top of the world, able to conquer anything — or so I thought — one moment, and then have what felt like everything taken away later that week?

I arrived at Borderline Bar and Grill an enthusiastic student ready to let loose and dance and enjoy the company of my friends during midterm season, and I left behind one of my best friends and the remainder of my innocence. I’ve always been one to plan every aspect of my life, but the Borderline Shooting showed me that I don’t even know what will happen in the next minute.

Through the unpredictability of life that I’ve seen in the last year, I’ve learned to find peace in new places and at new heights. I’ve realized that it’s OK to not know what’s coming, because I’m more resilient than I ever anticipated.

As humans, we know how to bounce back from whatever life throws at us. Some days, I feel discouraged because I don’t think I’ve grown much since last November, but to see that I survived a mass shooting, lost a best friend, evacuated from a wildfire, took first semester finals, went to therapy, communicated about my trauma with professors when lines were crossed, (barely) passed second semester finals and went abroad, I think I have enough proof to know I have the strength to keep moving forward. I don’t know what the rest of this year has in store, let alone the rest of my life, but I know I’ll be OK.

There are several things I’ve done that have helped me heal. The most important was to spend time doing things that really mattered and with people who support and love me.

Social media is a big part of my life, and I knew I had to make significant changes to how I used it and presented myself. I no longer cared about keeping up an image and showing a highlight reel of my life — which is hard to do when you’re at an all-time low anyway — so once I was ready to return to social media, I started to share about how I really felt.

If you scroll through my Instagram feed, you’ll see posts about my fears, triggers and nightmares. I still share about the fun things I do and places I go, but I don’t feel pressured to put on a happy face and act like everything is OK when it isn’t. I no longer feel the need to keep following any accounts that made me feel bad about myself or others, and I started to surround myself with positivity on a platform notorious for comparison and unhappiness.

I was also inspired by how Alaina was always authentically herself, even in moments people found her weird, and this helped me embrace who I am in front of others. I loosened up on my academic standards, and although this has put my scholarship on the line, I know the time I spent on emotional growth and healing was not wasted.

I spent more time journaling and playing music and having meaningful conversations with the people I love because those are the things I am passionate about and bring me joy and I want to be remembered for. I’ve prioritized my own mental health and processing, and I learned to set boundaries when I could not handle more social interaction or needed space to process my emotions.

My faith played a big part in my healing process. Immediately following the shooting, I realized I had to root myself in what I knew about God. I anticipated many people would ask how I could still believe in Him after surviving a mass shooting and losing a suitemate, so I spent more time in the Word, studying God’s character.

I know He brings hope and peace, and I know the God who was with me at Borderline is the same God who made the sunset I watched at Zuma just days prior and the same God who has walked with me through my healing. I know I can turn to Him no matter how ugly I think my feelings are, and I know He is infinitely more heartbroken over the shooting and Alaina’s death than I can imagine.

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In Memory of
THE BORDERLINE 12
Sean Adler
Cody Coffman
Blake Dingman
Jake Dunham
Sgt. Ron Helus
Alaina Housley
Daniel Manrique
Justin Meek
Mark Meza
Kristina Morisette
Telemachus Orfanos
Noel Sparks

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From embers to emerald

BY | MILAN LOIACONO
I was trapped in the flood of people trying to evacuate down PCH, half my house packed into the back of my car and smoke rolling over the hills as the fire burned closer. Instinctively, I grabbed my camera and started taking pictures out the window as we crawled along. It’s a way of processing without words, in a form that I can hand someone else. In the moment I look for ways to tell the story, encapsulating not just what happened but what it felt like to be there. Pictures also give me a springboard of sorts; a starting point for when I do need to talk but the enormity feels daunting.

I had the surreal realization that this was one of those monumental moments; a mark in my past, history being made in a terrible way that I had a front seat to watch as it unfolded. When I drove back down to Malibu after Thanksgiving, I didn’t know what I’d find. The 2.5 weeks back in Malibu before leaving again for Christmas break were an absolute blur of exhaustion and pain. In the midst of that chaos, I felt a responsibility to capture and document this period of life. As one of the few photographers on campus, I had the opportunity to offer a unique tool that could potentially help with that process.

Photography at its core captures memories. It’s tempting to only document the highlights, but there is a power in the painful memories, too; their sharpness keeps you softened and empathetic in a world that can batter you into a calloused soul. I don’t want to forget the sharpness of grief, the constant uncertainty, or even the downright panic of that time. Because on the other side of that month, I don’t want to forget the strength of the community that rose from the literal ashes to fight physical fire with a fiery passion to overcome, rebuild and be stronger for it.

As the one-year memorial rolls around, and eventually the two-year, the five-year, even the 10-year, I hope this series plays a small role in remembering both the bitter and the sweet. And when the memories get too painful, may it remind you to lean into the compassionate strength of a community that was forged through fire.

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One year after tragedy struck the Borderline Bar and Grill, the Thousand Oaks community pays tribute to the victims and survivors by opening a Healing Garden memorial at the Conejo Creek Park.

One year after the Nov. 7, 2018 Borderline Shooting — which resulted in the death of 12 individuals, including first-year Pepperdine student Alaina Housley — the Thousand Oaks community continues to heal. The Healing Garden memorial opening in Conejo Creek North Park is intended to support the community in its recovery.

To generate a safe space to remember the victims and honor the survivors, officials from the City of Thousand Oaks, the Conejo Recreation and Park District and the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office came together to create the Lakeside Pavilion garden. The three city agents will host the official dedication ceremony for the garden, located at 1379 E Janss Road in Thousand Oaks, Nov. 7 at 3:15 p.m., according to the park website.

Jim Friedl, general manager of Conejo Recreation and Park District, said he, along with the city representatives and sheriff’s department, decided that this park would be ideal because of its public land and popular location. Most important, it made their goal of completing construction in time for the one-year anniversary attainable.

Friedl said Andrew Mooney, the senior park planner for Conejo Recreation and a landscape architect, researched the memorials of other communities affected by mass shootings before designing the garden.

The three city agencies chose to name the memorial a Healing Garden to convey its purpose as a place for reflection, solace and hope, Friedl said. He encourages anyone struggling to overcome the tragedy to take advantage of the new garden.

“It’s going to be a special place — a place where people really pause and think about those we have lost and the hardships of the people who have survived,” Councilmember Bob Engler said.

Engler said the Healing Garden will be “a peaceful park where people can come and reflect on what happened.”

In addition to memorializing those who died, it will also recognize those who survived and are now facing the difficult task of moving forward; each detail in the garden revolves around everyone whom the shooting affected.

The garden features 12 large granite benches to honor each of the victims, while the walkway is paved with 248 stones — one for each survivor. Engler said the lake, which is home to turtles, koi fish and ducks, has 12 fountain jets to represent each of the victims.

“I’m looking forward to this week of memorial because it shows how we pulled together in that moment during Borderline and then the next day when the fire came through,” Engler said. “It’s a lesson for us all to remember that we can count on each other, so I hope that’s something the memorial can bring together.”

Thousand Oaks Mayor Rob McCoy told the Thousand Oaks Acorn that because the Woolsey Fire prevented individuals from grieving immediately after the shooting, this memorial serves as an opportunity for the community to grieve together one year later.

Friedl said he has never before been part of a deeper wound in his community.

“I haven’t seen pain and anguish like I have over the initial months,” Friedl said. “I also haven’t seen the
Thousand Oaks continues to recover from Nov. 7 tragedy

kind of generosity and willingness to help.”

Friedl said the city had so many offers of help that they were not able to accept them all. Thousand Oaks residents provided $250,000 in donations from community members.

“The community is exceptionally interested in the care and well being of the survivors and victims’ families and our first responders,” Friedl said.

Thousand Oaks resident Jath Niel Andrade is a staff member at the Conejo Goebel Adult Community Center, where he was working the day of the Borderline Shooting. He said officials used the center as a gathering location to notify families of the status of their loved ones.

“As someone who worked here during the shooting, to see the families and how the community came together pretty quickly to help them out and to provide resources for the families was really important,” Andrade said.

Andrade said he sees other communities that are affected by shootings struggle to recover and appreciates that the Thousand Oaks officials focused on making the memorial a priority.

“I just think it’s great that even something like Parks and Recreation can come together with the city and just be there for the community,” Andrade said.

Thousand Oaks community members and leaders emphasized the unexpected nature of the shooting.

“We’ve prided ourselves on being the safest city in the country,” Engler said. “Most of us, when [the shooting] occurred, thought if it can happen here, it can happen anywhere. Most of us thought we could avoid that sort of thing, but that’s not possible.”

Friedl said the city is more vigilant than before and must now balance this need for safety with the desire to remain a free, welcoming community.

“I never thought it would happen here — that’s such a cliche, but it is true,” Friedl said.

Friedl said the community still has “a ways to go” in terms of healing, and although everyone’s process is different, there is no alternative.

Engler said he wants people to know that the city still stands strong and that he empathizes with those who were even more impacted by the events of November.

Borderline Bar and Grill, located at 99 Rolling Oaks Drive, is fenced off from the nearby shopping center, only leaving a small memorial exposed. The memorial includes handmade offerings, such as photos of each victim, along with flowers, cards and stuffed animals.

The location first opened in Malibu in the late ‘80s and moved to Thousand Oaks in 1993.

“With over 2,500 square feet of wide open dance floor, Borderline has provided a haven for country line dancing folks of all ages,” according to its website.

Engler said he does not know if Brian Hynes, the co-owner of Borderline, will reopen or relocate.

“He personally knew a lot of people there that night and several of them were killed,” Engler aid. “He lost his business and friends.”

Engler said those who were not present at the time of the shooting do not fully understand its impact on the community or the various layers associated with the trauma, especially regarding its impact on the Borderline owners and staff.

Hynes has organized the inaugural Borderline Strong Party in the Park from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 9, at the memorial, according to the bar’s website. It will feature live music, line dancing and food trucks for all ages.

“The city, the park district and the sheriff’s department are really trying to convey that we haven’t forgotten,” Friedl said. “We have your back, and let’s continue to heal as a community.”

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From the president’s perspective: AKB reflects on Borderline and Woolsey
It is seldom good news when the telephone rings unexpectedly at 2:20 a.m. It was at that hour on Nov. 8, 2018, when one of my colleagues, Phil Phillips, informed me that an active shooting incident had occurred at the Borderline Bar and Grill a few hours earlier and that one of our students was missing. Pepperdine trains for situations like this one, and I had full confidence in the response of those I knew who were already staffing our Emergency Operations Center (EOC); however, one is never prepared for the possible death of a student.

I joined the EOC group and experienced painful uncertainty as the night wore on. After an hour or so, we learned that Alaina Housley's iPhone and Apple Watch were located inside the Borderline Grill and that no one inside was alive. As I write that sentence, I have to pause — all over again — at the cold truth we had to embrace. We committed to keeping this knowledge confidential until Alaina's parents confirmed her passing.

A few of us went to DeBell Hall at 3:15 a.m., to be with students who were present at the Borderline Bar and Grill or who knew, as suitemates and roommates, those who had been part of the planned night of fun and relaxation. For many of them, it was their first encounter with the sometimes sudden finitude of life.

I was drawn to a young woman, an RA, whom I learned was part of the heroic rescue of many that very night when she acted bravely to enlarge an opening in a plate glass window of the restaurant and dance hall with her bare hands. She was injured, and I approached her and thanked her for her willingness to risk her life to save others. I said, “You are a hero,” but she just shook her head. I will never forget Josie Utz for her bravery.

By daybreak, we were planning a prayer service, grasping the fact it could become a memorial service. It was not until 15 minutes before the service at 11 a.m. on Nov. 8, that we learned we had permission to let the community know that Alaina had been taken from us. When I informed the overflow audience assembled in Smothers Theatre of that fact, the audible gasp from those in the room said it all. No one present will forget that moment of profound loss and sadness. I would go on to say that no one within our community will forget the courage and resolve that began to form throughout the night and only grew as the day unfolded.

The fire known as the Woolsey Fire was growing. At first, it looked like it would pass Pepperdine to the north, but we knew that some of our family would certainly experience loss. We reestablished the EOC for a new and different urgent purpose and began the vigil of our regular briefings.

As a veteran of the 1985, 1993, 1996 and the two 2007 fires, there was a certain familiarity with this massive fire mingled with remarkably unpredictable winds and a change in fire resource allocation that played out through the night. Our shelter-in-place strategy became politicized unnecessarily and unhelpfully.

The fire threat passed, and we allowed our campus family to return to their homes Saturday, Nov. 10. The Woolsey Fire in Southern California officially ended Nov. 21, 2018, leaving homes destroyed, lives lost and many questions unanswered.

I have written about loss in this reflection. Allow me to speak of resilience: I hold up all who endeavored to keep the Pepperdine community safe; I honor those in the aftermath who turned to use our campus to serve a battered and bruised Malibu community; and, I know with all my heart, that as Pepperdine faces challenges in the years ahead, we will always be courageous and determined people better prepared to respond than ever before. That is and will always be my prayer.

Andrew K. Benton
President Emeritus
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Mentally and physically processing one’s response to trauma can take different forms for each individual.

The one-year anniversary of the Borderline Shooting and Woolsey Fire will have an impact on not just victims but also students and others present during the traumatic events, once again reminding them of events they may have tried to forget.

Not everyone has the same reaction to trauma and it is normal to experience a wide range of physical and emotional reactions.

Senior Jalen Frantal almost went to the Borderline Bar and Grill the night of the shooting but could not go because he was leaving early to attend a regional championship with his cross country team the next day.

“It wasn’t even on our minds the fact that there were fires nearby because we were all trying to go through the feelings of losing a Pepperdine student,” Frantal said.

The following day, Frantal’s landlord called and said the house that Frantal lived in with his teammates burned in the Woolsey Fire.

“Someone who didn’t experience being here during the fires and the shooting, you can’t really explain what it feels like,” Frantal said. “It’s just like this feeling of overwhelming uncertainty and a conglomeration of feelings you can’t really describe.”

Though many psychiatrists such as Judith Herman have provided descriptions of the phases of recovery from trauma, Shelle Welty, psychologist and associate director of the Pepperdine Counseling Center, wrote in an email that it is important to remember that people do not necessarily move through them in a linear fashion.

“While many members of our community may have begun moving toward the Remembrance and Mourning stage, it’s important to remember that all of us may revert back to the stage of needing more Safety and Stability as the anniversary approaches,” Welty wrote.

Some students have had ongoing concerns about their mental health ever since the time of the tragedies while others have bounced back quickly, said Connie Horton, vice president of Student Affairs.

“There’s sometimes with trauma, they call it the ‘sleeper effect’ where it can go away and go in the background for a while and then it gets triggered again,” Horton said.

Welty wrote there are a variety of things that might trigger students. These include the weather, the time of the semester, news of shootings and fires, smoke on campus and anticipation of anniversary events.

“Yesterday, I walked out of my house and I saw all this smoke from the Tick Fire and I was like, ‘Oh shoot, here we go again,’” Frantal said. “It’s just that feeling of dread and uncertainty.”

These triggers can cause one’s body to react in various ways — including difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, nightmares and lack of appetite — before one’s mind even recognizes the reasons for feelings of anxiety, sadness and fear. Welty wrote.

“It is OK to be reminded again,” Horton said. “We don’t usually work through things all at once and ‘done.’ That’s not how the human condition works.”

These triggers may also be a sign of one’s psyche saying there is still processing to be done, Horton said.

“Especially if you’re having nightmares or it’s starting to intrude again, then I would encourage people to go get the help they need,” Horton said. “We have and we will continue to support the Counseling Center so there’s not a waitlist.”

There are many possible reactions to an anniversary, Welty wrote.

Some people might experience the feelings associated with the trauma of a year ago. Others might want to avoid the anniversary as much as possible by leaving the area or avoiding times of remembrance. Others will welcome the opportunity to remember and mourn as a community. For some, the anniversary can be a time of reflecting on the past year, considering what has changed in the community and for the individual.

“People will have different responses and needs as the anniversary approaches,” Welty wrote. “It is helpful to remember that those around us may
respond differently from us. Each of us has to find ways to remember and recover that feel congruent for us, that keep us moving forward.”

Welty emphasized the importance of self-care, especially since the upcoming anniversary comes at one of the busiest times of the semester.

“It is very important that we, communally and individually, allow space for these anniversaries,” Welty wrote. “They will affect us spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. To avoid remembering may be a helpful short-term strategy on difficult days, but it will not help us recover over the long term.”

Horton said the administration is currently in the process of hiring a resilience coordinator to plan different events in collaboration with multiple departments that focus on resilience.

“I think about it from a public health point of view of like, yes, downstream we’re dealing with it, we’re helping people in crisis, but let’s get upstream further,” Horton said. “How are people falling in the river? It’s good that we’re getting them when they’re drowning, but let’s get them before they fall in.”

Frantal said the upcoming anniversary events are important for remembering the lives impacted and initiating conversations about future government and community actions, but he does not want to relive the experience.

“I definitely don’t want to feel the fear that I felt during that time,” Frantal said.

It is important to remember that it takes time to understand the world differently after a tragedy, Welty wrote.

“Restoration cannot be rushed,” Welty wrote. “It will be a natural process as we allow ourselves time to accept, remember and respond to a new reality.”

Stages of Recovery
TREATMENT AIMS

01
ESTABLISHING SAFETY
- Securing safety
- Stabilizing symptoms
- Fostering self-care

02
REMEMBRANCE/MOURNING
- Reconstructing the trauma
- Transforming traumatic memory

03
RECONNECTION
- Reconciliation with self
- Reconnection with others
- Resolving the trauma

Infographic courtesy of Judith L. Herman
Oct. 19, 2018, Alaina Housley learned she had been accepted to spend her sophomore year in Florence, Italy. It had been her dream ever since coming to Pepperdine.

Nov. 7, 2018, this dream was cut short when Alaina was killed suddenly at the Borderline Shooting. While she may be gone, Alaina's presence continues to be an important piece of the Florence community, Florence Program Director Elizabeth Whatley said.

"Even though we have 53 students this year, I keep saying 54 because, in my mind, she's our 54th student," Whatley said. "My first convocation ... I said this year is dedicated to her and that even though she's not physically with us this year, she's with us in spirit."

This commemoration began shortly after the shooting and Woolsey Fire in November 2018, Whatley said. When the students learned of the tragedies, they wanted to honor Alaina on the Florence campus through the dedication of a cypress tree, which represents eternal life, on both Florence and Malibu campuses.

As a result, the Malibu campus will be dedicating an olive tree — because Malibu's climate isn't conducive to cypress trees — to Alaina on Nov. 7 by the Thornton Administrative Center.

With the Borderline Shooting and Woolsey Fire having directly impacted several students in the Florence program, Whatley said she left memorial planning open for the students to organize.

"It's all student-led," Whatley said. "I've just provided a time where every student could come together."

Florence Planned Events

Two of these students, sophomores Jordyn Regier and Zoe Walsh, planned the memorial events along with three other students. One year after Alaina's death, Nov. 7, the two women will speak at a memorial service.

Regier plans to speak to her experience as a Borderline survivor and Walsh will talk about the life and personality of Alaina as her close friend and former suitemate. Sophomore Kaylee Hoy will also talk about her experience as a resident of DeBell, Alaina's freshman house.

"We really want this program to feel like they know her because she would have been known by this house," Walsh said. "The way I'm trying to achieve that is by talking about who she was in more concrete ways. We're just really trying to focus this on letting everyone access their grief."

The memorial is meant as a time for the community to grieve and express their emotions, regardless of their connection to the events of last November, Walsh said.

"I'm also going to talk about that and..."
talk about how they have a right to their emotions,” Walsh said. “I know it was really hard for people on the outside of the tragedy to really grieve, to give themselves permission to grieve because they were indirectly connected. So I want to encourage the house to recognize this isn’t just like a me and Jordan thing … It’s the house’s day.”

Walsh said students will also have time to write letters to Alaina’s family.

“They’ve expressed how much they want to be involved with the students here and involved with the Florence program,” Walsh said. “I think it’s one way that they really keep in contact with their daughter’s memory. So I want to reciprocate that and bring the Florence program to them and give [students] a chance to reach out and show them support in what has to be a really hard time.”

Students will also be able to meet in smaller groups to share experiences and reflect on Alaina, Walsh added.

“We’ve just been trying to let everyone’s voices come through,” Regier said. “We want everyone to be able to talk about their feelings about everything and … how they’re feeling now.”

Walsh said she will be placing a Giving Key necklace on the Florence campus’ cypress tree for Alaina’s mother, in addition to a planned plaque written in Italian.

The community will also be placing envelopes out for each student, in which students can place notes of affirmation for one another, Walsh said. The idea for this came from Walsh’s desire to humanize who Alaina was — to emphasize where Alaina was as a freshman undergraduate student two months into college.

“She was in a very uncertain mindset, in a very uncertain environment, and she was insecure,” Walsh said. “You could see it in the way that she would ask us for her approval on her outfits before leaving … [or] consult us on every decision. She didn’t like to walk alone.”

This project is meant to support others who may be in a similar place Alaina was in, Walsh said.

“What she really needed in that time was affirmation — someone telling her that it’s going to be OK and that she’s worthwhile of love and belonging,” Walsh said. “She was just starting to figure that out — that she is allowed to be authentic and loved — when she was taken from us. I’m encouraging the house to give to each other what I wish I could have given more to her.”

Whatley said the students will also make quilt squares to contribute to “The Hope Forward Quilt of Care” made on Malibu campus Nov. 8.

Alaina’s Spirit Lives On

Walsh’s connection to Alaina has directly affected her experience abroad, she said.

“Going into Florence with Alaina’s memory defined my experience,” Walsh said. “It brought up new grief.”

But it also forced her to take charge, she said.

“It also made me step into this role that I hadn’t stepped into before,” Walsh said. “I kind of let my suitemates handle most of it last year, where I realized that I was one of the only people who knew Alaina and I began to be more active in carrying out her memory.”

Part of this role, she said, is keeping Alaina’s family connected to the Florence program through updates and other messages.

“When she really needed in that time was affirmation — someone telling her that it’s going to be OK and that she’s worthwhile of love and belonging,” Walsh said. “She was just starting to figure that out — that she is allowed to be authentic and loved — when she was taken from us. I’m encouraging the house to give to each other what I wish I could have given more to her.”

Whatley said the students will also make quilt squares to contribute to “The Hope Forward Quilt of Care” made on Malibu campus Nov. 8.

Memorializing November’s events thousands of miles from Malibu can be a challenge, Regier said. Living in DeBell her freshman year meant she was constantly surrounded by women closely touched by Borderline and the loss of Alaina.

“There’s a learning curve of having new people [in Florence] and not being with the people who were there with me that night,” Regier said. “But I also think that we are a very close house [in Florence] and everyone in the program wants to get to know each person on a deeper level.”

Walsh said despite the challenges of being away from her friends and suitmates from last year, the change of scenery has been good for her.

“When I was on campus grieving, my main support system was my suite and it was really hard because I felt like that the pressure to grieve a certain way because we were so often lumped together as a unit,” Walsh said.

With everyone grieving the same loss, it was challenging knowing how much to lean on one another, she added. At Florence, she has gotten to hear oth-
ers’ perspectives and express her grief in her own way.

“But it is hard to … [not] be with all the people that I would want to be with because we’re scattered around the world,” Walsh said. “I love this group and I want to be with this group … but I want to also be in community with my suitmates, but that’s impossible because we’re scattered.”

Being in a smaller community abroad also means she and other students in Florence have more control over how they choose to commemorate Nov. 7, she added.

“There aren’t as many voices battling for attention,” Walsh said. “We’re able to go in the direction that we think is best for this specific program without having a whole bunch of conflicting interests, being able to grieve the way that works best for us and then having people to rely on that have different experiences, who may be a little stronger than I am on that day or leading up to it.”

Regier agreed that the exposure to new viewpoints is helpful.

“It’s definitely interesting hearing other people’s perspectives because even though there isn’t anyone else in Florence who was at Borderline, people still have connections to it and people are willing to talk to me about it and help me talk through it or remember in my own way how it was for me,” Regier said.

Whatley said she thinks the students have found a supportive community abroad.

“I think here they are feeling empowered and embraced and I think that they feel that they’re listened to,” Whatley said. “I feel like we’re in a striving mode right now that is very positive.”

**Commemorating at Malibu**

People need to be honest about their emotions and experiences as they process trauma, Regier and Walsh said.

“First and foremost, people should own their own experiences for what they are — don’t make it any more, don’t make it any less,” Walsh said. “It’s really easy to either exaggerate the little connections you had [to trauma] or repress them, and I don’t think either of those are very healthy for individuals or the community.”

It also means they must be honest about who Alaina was, Walsh added.

“I feel like a lot of the rhetoric surrounding that loss last year was talking about how she was this light and she was an angel and she lit up every room she walked into,” Walsh said. “And she was amazing and bright and wonderful — but those aren’t real ideas and they’re often used to describe almost anyone who dies young.”

Grieving Alaina means remembering her and all of her intricacies, Walsh said.

“Focus on what made Alaina Alaina,” Walsh said. “Get to know those details of her life and grieve that. Don’t grieve this broad general martyr Alaina was made into. It reduces the person that we actually lost into less than a person. What we really want to do on this anniversary is talk about her and talk about what genuinely happened and what we genuinely lost.”

Regier reiterated the importance of looking beyond the surface level of what happened at Borderline.

“It’s really easy to think of tragedies as news headline[s], but not actually remember the individual stories,” Regier said. “I would encourage people to … reflect and remember the victims of Borderline, not as names or statistics, but as real living people with families and personality traits and annoying qualities about them and good qualities about them.”

Walsh mentioned the importance of spreading kindness for others, a central value of Alaina’s Voice.

“Make it a day where you can do something emotionally productive and you can be there,” Walsh said. “I think people sometimes get nervous to ask because they don’t want to cross boundaries, but there’s no harm in just offering to listen to someone.”
If a pie could speak:
An Account of the 72 hours from Borderline to Woolsey

BY | ALLISON LEE

Like any regular Wednesday night, I made my way up to Drescher for House Group at Jeff and Cathryn Walling's house. Jake was taking my phone to text random numbers messages about frozen peas and other silly things. Refusing to listen to any of my pleas to stop, Jake received a much-deserved slap on his forehead. Cathryn left frozen pies for us to throw into the oven, with a couple leftover on the counter when house group concluded. Between my decision to bring a pie home and stepping foot out the door, I had forgotten to take a pie with me.

It was that time in the semester when everyone gets a little busier, and Annabelle and I had gone from seeing each other every day, for anywhere from a minute to a couple hours, to missing multiple days in a row. Annabelle wanted to go to Borderline; being someone who has no particular interest in country line dancing but also someone who loves Annabelle, I decided to go. I rushed back to my room to throw on some white high tops and a red and green flannel I thrifted in Virginia.

My roommate was already in bed and pleaded with me not to go out that night. The volleyball game had a couple minutes on the clock — Annabelle, Hat-tie, Jake and I decided to sprint down to Firestone. As we were heading down the stairs, people started hiking back up, telling us the game had just finished. The end of a game is synonymous with free Chick-fil-A at Pepperdine. So I told everyone to go faster.

Sure enough, there was plenty of Chick-fil-A sandwiches left over when we got there. I stuffed one in my pocket and ate the other. We ran into Conner, splitting up into two groups: Annabelle drove Hattie and Janie; I drove Tanner, Hannah Kate and Jake.

Realizing I had forgotten my pie, I asked if we could make a pit stop before Borderline. We walked in on Rachel, Julia and Jonathan watching a scary movie. Tanner squeezed in between them on the couch and they asked if we could just stay there for the night. I grabbed the pie and told them the other car was already on the way so we had to go. Through the canyon we went and drove onto the 101 freeway, getting off on Moorpark Road.

I parked my car in the last spot of a lane and we looked around for the entrance. Before I got to the door, they drew two big black X's on my hands. The bouncers also made Tanner cut off all his wristbands from previous concerts (and he was very sad about that). Hannah Kate paid first at the counter: $15. I turned around to look at Tanner and tell him I did not want to pay $15. He didn't want to either so he asked, “Should we just leave?” But Hannah Kate already paid. Jake went up after only to have his card denied. Tanner and I thought it was a sign that we shouldn't go in. Jake tried one more time, denied again. He asked Tanner to pay for him.
All four of us walked in $60 later. We went to the left first, walking around the pool tables and looking at the bar. We looped to the other side to find Emily before they started teaching a dance.

Props to anyone who knows how to line dance or is capable of picking it up fast.

The next 10 minutes were a mental and physical challenge to keep up and remember the steps. It did look like the art when pieced together, and I did feel quite successful when I got 32 counts down.

On one of the moves, I saw Josie and a couple of her residents behind me and waved. The song concluded, and I had my fill of line dancing for the night. We made our way to the short wall around the dance floor where people stood. I talked to Josie and she introduced me to all her residents there. Annabelle, Hattie and Janie finally arrived. Turns out, Janie had left her wallet at school (with her ID) and they turned back. Having just arrived, they wanted to hit the dance floor. Surviving only a few simple moves before people started twirling faster, they came back to where we were standing.

I took a Snapchat video of Annabelle dancing, clearly not matching the moves on the rest of the dance floor. It had not been 10 minutes since they arrived when I heard the first sound.

Having a sister who is sensitive to loud sounds, such as balloons popping and fireworks, I am hyper aware of sounds along those lines. It did sound like a balloon popping. Others said it sounded like champagne. I looked around, but no one else seemed to notice. When the second one went off, people started to look around. By the time the third, fourth, fifth, sixth went off consecutively, I grabbed Hattie (the only one to my right) and ran away from the shooter.

The rest of our group was to my left, and I knew I did not want to see the shooter or witness anyone get shot. Tänner did turn and looked at the shooter. We were fewer than four feet away from the cashier, where the shooter entered. When I grabbed Hattie, I pushed us down to our knees and dragged her to the wall in front of the stage to be out of the shooter’s line of sight. The loudest thought that crossed my mind in the moment: “I can’t die right now. I have to stay alive for my sister.”

“This isn’t happening right now. There cannot be a shooter. This isn’t happening,” Hattie said, her voice trembling with fear and anger. All I could respond is, “Hattie we have to get out of here.” I had seen the bright green exit sign about five feet away from us. As soon as I heard the gunshots stop, I pulled Hattie up and started pushing her. I must have let go because Hattie went into the kitchen door right next to the exit. I was running down this ramp, seeing people trip and fall down the side of the ramp.

Never having been to Borderline before, I had no idea where my car was in relation to this back exit. But I never let my legs stop moving. I kept looking back, trying to find familiar faces. I kept thinking, “I can’t leave them in there, will they meet me at my car? How long do I wait for them before they start closing the parking lot?”

Before I knew it, I was at my car door and unlocking it to get into the driver’s seat, lock the doors, and take a minute to catch my breath. I tried calling 9-1-1 but the line was just beeping. Before I could take another breath, I saw someone knocking on my window. He was telling me to let him in, that he was a cop, that he was bleeding. “I can’t. I’m sorry,” I said. But after his multiple pleas, I unlocked the door and told him to sit in the back seat. He rushed in to sit next to the boysenberry pie I had picked up maybe an hour ago.

More people were running out now, and I feared hitting someone as I backed out. Just as I was turning out of the parking lot, four police cars came rushing in. The guy in the backseat told me to roll down my window and honk at them to tell them what was going on. But none of them stopped. I turned onto Moorpark Road and took him to the only place that was still open: Jack in the Box. He told me to drop him off there and come back in 30 minutes. If he had passed out, take him to the hospital. I told him I did not have time for that and we needed to get him help right away. At that point, I got a call on my phone.

Annabelle had jumped out of a window and made it to her car. I still remember the moment her voice cracked from telling me what happened to completely sobbing. That was the first time my heart kicked into action because I felt it tear in half. I told her to stay down and not to go out until it was safe. I told her to call her family, text them and tell them what had happened.

As I was still on the phone, I texted my family group chat two texts “There was a shooting at Borderline,” and “I am safe.”

I hung up with Annabelle for her to call her parents. The guy sitting in my backseat was talking to his friends, too, and they hadn’t found everyone. But he told me his name was Ty. Shots went off again. I reversed out of that parking spot and drove right over the grass and off the curb onto Moorpark Road and decided to take him to my friend’s house. I parked out in front and walked up to the door, knocking with urgency but also announcing it was me as to not scare them.

My friend’s dad, a retired cop, opened the door, and I told him there was a shooting at Borderline and this guy was hurt. We went in to sit on the couch as he got the first aid kit and cleaned up Ty’s bloody arm. He gave me a couple wipes for my knees that were pretty scratched up and a long cut on my thigh.

I texted my friend Kayiu that there was a shooting at Borderline and asked her for live news updates on the status of the shooter. I asked Josie who she was
with and if everyone she was with was accounted for.

In my staff group chat, along with Josie, trying to get a head count of everyone who was there. I was still waiting to hear back from everyone who rode in the car with me. Once my friend’s dad bandaged us up, he said it would be safe to go back to get our friends because the place would be surrounded and filled with cops by then.

I didn’t believe him. But he said that Borderline was now the safest place to be with all the cops there. I was still waiting on a live update from Kayiu, but Ty said his friends were waiting for him. At this point, my dad had woken up and seen my texts and asked where he should meet me. We started to drive toward Borderline, only to be met with cops who guarded off the road under the freeway. My friend’s dad called me and told me not to go back, as the news reported that the shooter had not been found. I turned off to the left to make a turn in one of the small roads leading to businesses.

I was getting calls and texts from multiple people who had seen my Snapchat story, and quickly declined and ignored them as I tried to contact Tanner before his phone died. I told both Ty and my dad that we would meet at Big 5.

I never said goodbye to Ty that night. I parked my car and he ran out to hug his friends while my dad was waiting outside his car for me. Before I got to my dad’s arms, I felt the tears rush to my eyes.

Those tears raced down my cheek as I said between sobs, “I left them in there dad, how could I leave? If it was Angel [my sister] who was there, I never would have left without her.” And my dad just held me there, telling me it was not my fault in words that I can’t remember now.

We sat in my dad’s car for awhile as I told the Graphic group chat that I was there, notifying my staff group on updates — Josie still had two missing but she was in somebody’s home, and then speaking on the phone with Connie Horton, Maura Page and other authorities at Pepperdine.

At that point, I had not heard from Hattie at all. I later found out that in her school active shooter drills, she was taught not to text other people as shooters have found people hiding with their phone sounds. But Tanner sent me his location on Hannah Kate’s phone and told me he, Hannah Kate and Janie were all together.

My dad and I started driving the long way around to get to them as the roads were blocked off. We got to the complex they and others had run to and firefighters who were tending to people’s injuries. Janie had taken off her cowgirl boots before she started running and ended up hurting her toe quite badly. We all hugged and did not say too many words. For a November night in Thousand Oaks, it was quite chilly and I remember seeing neighbors bring out blankets for the people who were waiting by the firetruck.

We all sat in my dad’s car and waited to hear from Jake. He said he was in a house now with another girl who was at Borderline. He told us not to come until it was for sure safe to get him. We waited another 20 minutes in the car. Still no updates on where the shooter was. But Annabelle had ran out of her car and joined others by the police cars. She found one of the women Josie was missing.

We would have waited all night for it to be safe to go find Jake. So I decided that we were going to start driving toward the address he sent. We got to the house and texted Jake. We waited a few minutes before he and the girl came out to our car. I hugged both of them before they got in the car. Five of us squished in the backseat of my dad’s Honda Civic with my dad and Tanner in the front. The girl’s parents were asking where to meet us and I told her to tell them CVS. We drove back around and found her parents waiting on the side of the road, welcoming her into their arms.
Annabelle still hadn't seen Hattie and Emily yet but had been in contact with them. I told her we would wait for her in the Big 5 parking lot. Jake's phone battery was quickly dwindling as we were looking up more news on his phone. Helicopters were flying. Cop car lights flashing. There was a lot of silence and occasionally Jake would throw in a joke.

Hattie and Emily were escorted out, along with everyone who was hiding in the bathroom, to be joined with Annabelle by the cop cars. People from my staff group offered to come pick us up and DPS officers asked if we needed rides home. But I told them to hold off until we were reunited with the rest of our group.

We waited in the parking lot for at least an hour — still had no idea who the shooter was or if he was still in the building. We still had not heard from one Pepperdine student out of the 17 who were at Borderline. I cannot recall how many times we had to confirm that number for Pepperdine officials and for some reason, I could not remember Janie's name and I felt awful asking her for her name at least three times.

While we were waiting in the parking lot, I saw two of my friends, Kaviu and Araceli, park their car and rush over to the scene with their video camera to report on the situation. I hugged both of them real tight before they walked over. More questions popped up on my phone. Not as many answers.

It was 1 a.m. Annabelle told me a cop would escort them to the Big 5 parking lot to meet us. I looked up every time a car came by hoping that it was them. Twenty minutes passed before a cop came by and parked behind our car. We all rushed out of the car to hug each other. No words, just teary eyes.

I decided to drive my car back and my dad said he would drive the others, since Annabelle's car was still in the parking lot. I unlocked my car and Tanner, Hannah Kate and Jake piled in. Tanner laughed at the pie, still sitting in the backseat, still sticky, still a pie in the midst of everything.

I can't remember when I heard bits and pieces of everyone's stories. About how Tanner ran out the back exit from the kitchen and went back for Hannah Kate. About how they hid behind a car and heard more gunshots so they continued to run into the woods and didn't stop until they reached the complex. About how Tanner saw me running to my car. About how Jake had a gun pointed at him a number of times before finding Jake had ran in this neighborhood. He encountered an old lady who let him into her house and shortly after asked him to leave. He knocked on the door of a man who did not let him in because he had a daughter and pointed a gun right at him. He unlocked his truck for Jake to lay in.

Jake heard cars going by on the street, fearing they were still looking for the shooter. It was not until the girl came to the house and explained there had been a shooting that the man also brought Jake in and apologized for not believing him earlier.

We pulled into Smothers parking lot. My dad got out of the car to hug me goodnight before driving back home. The rest of us walked across the music building and into the HAWC. Jessie and Payton were at the doors, hugging us as we walked in. Andrew was also there. We walked up the stairs to see a counselor and some others.

I will never forget the HAWC worker bringing out chocolate muffins and coffee and seeing the applesauce and bottles of water on the side. We all took turns going to the bathroom because who knows the last time we went. We didn't sit for long before we decided that we wanted to go back. We thanked them for being there and we started to go down the stairs, down the hill and onto Lower Dorm road. When we got to Knott, Jake asked to pray. So we huddled up in the middle of the road and he led us in prayer.

I decided to walk them to Eaton, where we all went into the lobby. Hattie wanted to go back to her room but decided against it when she did not want to be alone. Jaime was waiting for us with Blake, making the couches into a circle and bringing his first aid kit down to us. We talked a bit more.

I remember Jaime sitting there and just listening. Jake had to take a phone call and Annabelle and I were processing through some things. It was the first time I noticed how long a scar was on my thigh and traced my finger down it.

The adrenaline was fading and my body started to feel tired. I walked back to Knott, noticing the darkness of the short walk more than times before. I tried to open my door and get in bed as quietly as possible. I grabbed my laptop to sit in bed and read through the news. My roommate woke up at that time and asked what I was still doing up. I said, "There was a shooting at Borderline." She jumped out of her bed and hopped onto mine to just hold me in her arms. She sat there with me, reading with me as a scrolled through a world that I could not believe I was a part of.

It was almost 5 a.m., when I closed my laptop and tried to get some sleep. With sunlight peaking in a couple hours later, I woke up to my phone vibrating. If it were not for all the texts and calls, I could have been convinced that the night before was all a long dream. My sister sent me a letter, apologizing that it would take something like this to happen for her to tell me she loves me.

Everyone from people I had not talked to since high school graduation to my closest mentors were reaching out, and I did not know how to even pick up the phone from people I was close to or how to answer the question "Are you OK?" The last time I had spoken on the phone was to update Pepperdine officials or find my friends. I remembered seeing there would be a prayer service at noon. I buried my face in my pillow and cried. I silenced my phone and tried to sleep a little longer, waking up too late for the prayer service.

Annabelle came over shortly after
I woke up. We sat in my bed, scrolling through the news. One by one, everyone trickled into my room: Jake, Tanner, Hattie, Hannah Kate.

Hattie was leaving later in the afternoon to fly back home. Maura told us food was being delivered to DeBell and we were welcome to swing by. We were hesitant about whether we wanted to go get food and even if we wanted to go to group counseling.

We decided to go to DeBell. I ate this surprisingly good tofu with rice. We ran into Conner and I remember telling him what happened the night before as if it was the most recent movie I had watched.

All of us walked to the Counseling Center together. People saw us on our walk over and asked us questions. I still couldn’t decide how I wanted people to react. When we sat down in a circle with a professional counselor who was brought in for the day, I remember sharing how we felt we could not be as sad because we did not lose anyone at Borderline. We felt that we did not have as much of a right to be upset when we were still here, sitting in a chair next to everyone we went to Borderline with. We went through a packet on the effects of trauma and what we could expect in the coming days, weeks and months.

Annabelle’s mom was flying in and my sister texted me. She was at a concert in LA and she had been AirDropped a threat of a shooting. She said she hated to have to ask me, but she wanted to know what she should do in the case of a shooting. I told my friends in the car and I remember feeling this atmosphere of panic and almost shock sink in.

Tanner zoned out as he was driving and all our bodies flung forward in an abrupt halt at a red light he didn’t see. My sister had gone out of the venue, where there were many people outside. I told her to go back in if there was somewhere where she could be and she found a way to get into VIP. I told my parents to start driving toward LA in case she needed to leave because she did not have a car. My older cousin was asking if I could help evacuate my aunt in Oak Park. I hesitated to tell my cousins what happened at my sister’s concert.

With my thoughts being pulled in all different directions, the Chick-fil-A worker was just patiently waiting for me to order. I remember feeling like I was in some kind of dream, getting my half-sweetened, half-unsweetened tea, putting my straw in and having to remind myself that this was all real.

We went back to the hotel to meet Annabelle’s mom, hugging each of us with teary eyes. She thanked me and she told me she was so thankful for my dad. On our way back up to the room, I had just stepped out of the elevator when I saw a notification from my staff group. There was a potential evacuation. I quickly told everyone and Annabelle’s mom suggested we all stay in her room. But I had to be back on campus and Jake needed insulin for his diabetes.

So we drove back through the canyon, with most of the ride silent and tense. By the time we got to campus, my RD had informed us to warn our residents of a potential evacuation and to pack a bag.

I remember going from suite to suite with my roommate, telling them that it was not that close yet but we needed to pack a bag in case we had to leave in the middle of the night. I remember convincing my worried residents that Pepperdine was the safest place we could be and that everything was going to be OK. When we got back to our room, I realized we had forgotten to close the windows in the bathroom to prevent the smoke from coming in. My roommate told me she would do it and that I should take a shower.

Before I got in the shower, I found out that my neighborhood was being evacuated. But my parents were in LA waiting to pick up my sister after the concert. I started asking around to see if my family could stay with them for the night. My RD brought in a card and gift bag with goodies from Target. In it was Old Spice deodorant, something my friend knew I would appreciate. I did, and that scent is still something that brings me peace to this day. I took a quick shower and got in bed to continue checking the status of evacuations and fires. I remember praying that if anything, we would be evacuated in the morning. I could not fall asleep until I knew my parents were safe.

The sun rose and I woke up incredibly thankful that we were walking to the Caf in daylight rather than the middle of the night. I went around calmly knocking on the doors and asking my residents if they needed anything. We grouped up in the lobby and I took the first group toward the Caf. Before we reached the CAC, my roommate asked if I wanted to go with her to her home. I told her I had to stay.

We waited outside on the back patio of the cafeteria. As we walked in, we were directed to check in at certain places. We were told to keep an eye out for our residents. Within the first hour, many people decided to leave, taking as many people as they could with them. I didn’t like the staring eyes and I didn’t like being in a huge place that felt so exposed. All I wanted to do was hide. So I ran up to the Sandbar, where I saw two friends from my Arabic class. They told me that one of my friends had cried telling the class about what happened the day prior.
I went into the Office of Student Accessibility to find my faculty family member from the Washington D.C. program. The office was dark due to the power outage and she had a dog named Oreo laying in the office. I talked to her for hours, talking about the whole thing from the beginning to the moment that we were sitting in a dark office with Oreo.

I came back down to lunch being served. I thought it was so odd that you could choose two pieces of sushi and then get an entree. It was food nonetheless. We had claimed two couches and the Caf looked like it had cleared out a decent amount. Before I finished eating, we were told we could go back to our dorms.

I walked back with two friends, taking a picture of them with their masks in the Smothers parking lot with the smoke behind them. I ran into my D.C. faculty family getting in their car and invited me to come with them, I told them I had to stay. When I got to my room, I had barely laid down before we were told to return to the caf.

Jake and I watched a couple episodes of “Arrested Development” on the couch and once the sun was setting, we FaceTimed Annabelle, who was in Utah now. At this point, many of my residents had already told me they were leaving and we gave hugs not knowing it would be weeks until I would see them again. After dinner, there were rumors of seeing the flames from the Sandbar and people slowly made their way up to see for themselves.

I went up to the second floor to find my friends from the Graphic, updating social media and communicating to the public exactly what was happening. When one had gotten off the phone with a police officer, he told us that we were going to be evacuated from our shelter-in-place. I went back down to our couch and started to put on my shoes. AKB spoke to us, assuring us again that we were in the safest place and we were not leaving. Shortly after, we were served ice cream. I ran over to the library, seeing the flames creeping down toward the main campus shuttle stop. I put some Boom Chicka Pop in small cups for people staying in the library and made my way back to the Caf.

Everyone was getting ready for bed and the lights in the Caf started to dim. Our couch was next to one of the exits, which I needed to feel like I could get out if needed. But being by the exit also meant more smoke seeping through the doors and needing to sleep with a mask on. The Caf started glowing from the flames visible through the window above Oasis. Students went up to sing with guitar, followed by a choir who led worship songs. On a two-seater couch, Tanner sat on the right side with my head in his lap and legs dangling off the side. Jake slept right underneath us. I fell asleep with head scratches and was rocked back to sleep every time I woke up scared.

I went to use the bathroom around 2 a.m., going to check on my staff group by Oasis. I sat with a few of them, talking about what it was like to have to make sure our residents were not worried when we had to mask our worries ourselves. We talked for a bit until my body asked me for more sleep. One of my friends offered to bring his blanket for me to use. The Oasis floor was so cold and hard, and yet we fell asleep.

We woke up to people packing up around us. HRL staff was released. I went back over to our couch to gather my belongings and ask my friends where they were planning on going. We decided that we would go back to our halls, shower and repack, and reconvene in my room after. We went to my car that was still parked in front of Smothers. The wooden plank that guarded the parking lot had been burned. And I found that so incredibly hilarious. I found my Chick-fil-A sandwich in the cup holder in my car.

I stood in the shower crying. Out of all the questions that were running through my head, the biggest were: Why did I make it out and not others? How could people say that “God protected me”?

When I got out of the shower, Tanner and Jake came to my room. We didn’t know how long school was going to be cancelled and they hesitated to buy an expensive flight and have to come back next week. Originally, Jake and Tanner were going to come with me. The only
problem was 10 people were already staying at my cousin’s house. We called
Annabelle and decided that it would be best for Jake and Tanner to fly to Utah
to be with Annabelle and her family in case they had to come back to Pepper-
dine soon. I checked in on my three res-
idents who were still here and figured
out where they were going to go. Two of
them were deciding whether or not to
fly back home. We talked through the
options in our messy suite. I told them
they had some time to decide and we
would leave around 2 p.m.

We loaded about a bag each in my
trunk and started driving. We dropped
off one at a house in the neighborhood
next to Pepperdine and turned onto
PCH. I have never been on PCH with-
out seeing another car on the road. We
zoomed all the way down, connected
to the 10 and jumped onto the 405. We
were still a little early for the flight, so
we stopped by IHOP because we real-
ized we were starving. Eggs, sausage
and pancakes never tasted so good.

We dropped one off at LAX and start-
ed the long haul to get to Camarillo via
the 118. With the 101 southbound closed,
what would normally have been a 20
minute drive home took almost three
hours. I remember feeling my eyelids
get heavy from processing all that de-
licious breakfast food as the sun was
setting. I quickly popped in the Hannah
Montana CD, and we jammed to the
good ole throwbacks for the remainder
of our drive. I dropped my last resident
off in Camarillo and was finally headed
to home, where my family was.

I got to my cousin’s house to see her
and my sister run dun the driveway. My
cousin broke into tears before she got
to me and quickly wiped them away. I
woke up that night whenever there was
a loud sound, and my sister would hold
me in her arms and rock me back to
sleep on our air mattress.

My sister told my mom I was at Bor-
derline. My mom asked, “Allison went to
Mexico?”

Throughout the next few weeks at
home, my mentors and close friends
took time to check on me daily. Face-
Time me and pray with me. I remember
one of my mentors saying that the ques-
tions that I was still navigating through
and feelings of guilt did not make God
any smaller. I still wrestled with people
telling me that “God protected me” be-
cause all I could think about was “Did he
not protect 12 of us?”

I remember my mom driving us up
our hill to go home one day and I heard
God whisper, “Can we say I never left
you because I never left Alaina’s side?”
That was my bit of peace that I held onto
for awhile. The night of Alaina’s memo-
rial, I was sitting in our house group and
I heard God say, “I protected who she
is.” He went on to explain that Alaina’s
identity, the passions she had and the
way she loved, could not and will not
ever change. I did not know Alaina per-
sonally, but I got a glimpse of who she
is in the testimonies of her parents and
friends. That is in fact something the
world could not have stolen from her.
My identity carries no more and no less
value because I am still here today. But
that when God holds our identity, who
we are is truly protected.

The weeks to follow did not get easi-
er nor did the following semester. I
found emotions rushing in at unexpect-
ed times and other instances my body
would choose to be numb instead of
letting my emotions run. I had night-
mares of evacuating people. I had times
I hated being alone. I had seasons of
being so irritable and hating the way I
lived my life. I had times and other instan-
tions that I was still navigating through
things and I still get frustrated when I
can’t control things I wish I could. I share
this story with parts that I have come to
peace with and other parts that I may
never understand. But I understand the
power of a “thinking of you” text. I un-
derstand that everyone is going through
something and we must approach each
other with love. I understand that I need
to be patient with myself and learn a
new understanding of grace day after
day. I understand that I would not have
gotten through everything without God
and community.

Vulnerability tells me that I cannot
control how people take my story or
how they will respond to it, but I trust
that it will reach the people it needs to
reach and encourage people that when
they don’t know what to do, love.

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DAWN MEGLI: Bringing peace through writing

BY | KAELIN MENDEZ

Dawn Megli cries. She cries at home, in her car and at her desk at the Thousand Oaks Acorn, where she writes profiles about the survivors and the families of the victims of the Borderline Shooting.

“She’s taking it personally and has agreed to do all these,” said her editor Kyle Jorrey, a 2004 Pepperdine alumnus. “She doesn’t want to give that up.”

Megli was asleep on the night of the shooting after she and fellow reporter Becca Whitnall did extensive coverage on the Thousand Oaks elections held Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018.

“We just put to bed what we thought was going to be the biggest paper of the year,” Megli said.

That night, Jorrey went alone to Borderline to cover the incident. The next morning, the election issue was already irrelevant, Megli said.

“By the time it came out the next morning, 12 people had been murdered, and it just seemed so inconsequential who’d won the election,” she said.

She knew that the Acorn had already done the initial reporting on the event and the memorial, but she said she felt like she wanted to do something more.

“I got down on my knees and I prayed and I just felt like God really put it on my heart that I needed to do as much Borderline reporting as possible,” Megli said. “And it really needed to be focused on all the families of the victims.”

She went on to write in-depth profiles on eight of the 12 victims, with a ninth written by Ian Bradley.

“He actually grew up with Tel Orfanos, and so the Orfanos family specifically requested him,” Megli said about Bradley.

Jorrey, however, said he was concerned about the impact that so many of these stories would have on Megli.

“After three or four, I said, ‘Dawn, I mean, this is a lot,’” Jorrey said. “She said, ‘No, we’re going to reach out, we’re going to get in touch with every family.’”

Megli, dedicated to this project, said she wrote the articles to honor who the victims were.

“I wanted every family to have an article that they could be proud of and point to and say, ‘Hey, that was my husband, that was my son, that was my daughter,’” she said.

But more than anything, she said she wanted these profiles to bring some
hope in spite of the hurt.

"I think it really helps the community heal because it makes the narrative about the light instead of the darkness and about the good instead of the evil," she said.

For her, these profiles are a way to cope with the deep emotions she experiences from reporting on Borderline, Megli said.

"Once I can get it into an article, once I can take this horrible story and give it a beginning, a middle and an end, and end it with an inspirational quote, that's my way of processing it," Megli said.

She said the Borderline reporting has not stopped for her.

"It went from talking about the incident to profiling the victims, talking to the survivors, and now it has been all about the recovery and what people are anticipating and hoping for when it comes to the one-year anniversary," she said.

Megli said she still frequently meets with the survivors and families of the victims of Borderline.

"It's actually been one of the most rewarding things I've ever done to be able to form relationships with these people," Megli said. "We get coffee; we hike. We run into each other a lot just at Borderline functions."

These people have welcomed her warmly in literal open arms, especially the families of the victims she has profiled.

"I just feel really privileged to be invited into their lives at such a painful and intimate moment," Megli said.

Through her profiling and reporting, Megli said she has come across many individuals who have impacted her through their words.

On one particular hike, Wendy Anderson, the mother of Borderline victim Noel Sparks, reflected back on the day she lost her daughter.

"She said, 'Nov. 7 was the day the devil came to town, but we pulled together as a community and chased him out.' Megli said. 'Amen, sister.'

In a series she wrote called SURVIVING BORDERLINE, Megli talked with survivor Taylor Von Molt, whose motto touched her the most: "We get to."

"When she's having a bad day, when she's stuck in traffic, she's like, 'We get to have a bad day. We get to sit in traffic. We get to take that big test at school, but our friends don't get to, so we have to live in honor of them,'" Megli said.

In the aftermath of the Woolsey Fire, a teacher from Newbury Park High School invited her to come with him as he returned to his burnt home for the first time. He was not there for the ashes of his home; he was there to recover his father-in-law's urn.

"I'm proud to report he found them," Megli said. "Beauty from ashes."

This is in reference to a text she received from Karen Helus, wife of Sergeant Ron Helus, regarding the remembrance of her husband as a hero.

Reading the text, Megli said, "The last year has been nothing short of beauty coming from the ashes of tragedy."

Megli said she finds the beauty in the little things, in conversation with others. She finds comfort and peace in hiking and in talking with her pastor and her father, a retired assistant chief for Ventura County Fire Department. Sometimes, she hikes while talking with her father, who, influenced by 36 years as a firefighter, calls such talks "critical incident debriefings."

"He shares stories with me about some of the things that he's seen and that helps because it helps me feel not so alone," she said.

In fact, she said she has a whole village of people she can rely on, as well as her faith in God.

"It just hit me that God gave me a job to do, but God also gave me the grace to do it," Megli said. "And I think that's the thing that I've been the most grateful for — that I've been on this journey, but I haven't been on it alone and I haven't been carrying this burden by myself. Not only have I had this amazing community of colleagues and victims and survivors and my parents around me, but I've also had God there every step of the way."

The truth of the matter is that she works for local newspaper, so these kinds of events will have a lasting impact on the community, Jorrey said.

"We're never really going to completely move on," he said. "Whereas the national media, CNN, even the LA Times — eventually they've got bigger stories. This will be our biggest story for years to come."

As for Megli, she said she will continue to collect these stories and cry because, for her, it's important.

"If you were in Thousand Oaks during those days, everyone has a story to tell," she said. "We don't want those stories to just disappear."

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“What consistently gave me hope last November was my faith and the Pepperdine community. I knew God would always be present and that there would be a light at the end of the tunnel even if I couldn’t see it in that moment. Knowing that all of Pepperdine was affected by the events helped me not feel alone in what we were enduring.”

- Sydney Scherler

“[A] Lyric from the song beautiful things ‘out of chaos life is being found in You’”

- Megan Rose

“The endless night of helicopters shaking the Caf as they rushed toward the descending fires the day after Borderline left me stunned with pain and fear. But a somber guitar echoed in the Caf when everyone fell asleep and those beautiful chords gave me hope, because I saw that something so beautiful could exist even in such darkness and destruction.”

- Alison Kwan

“What gave you hope?

BY | ALLISON LEE

“Honesty I’m thinking about it and seeing my nephew Kenta gave me hope.”

- Cindy Kim

“My mom and God’s Word.” - Ike Egwuonwu

“To be honest, for me hope wasn’t a prominent emotion. I’d say my feelings were more dominated by a sense of calm and contentment, a sense that everything would turn out exactly how it was supposed to. That probably stemmed from my trust in God and relationships with those around me. I really appreciated the intense feeling of community and intimacy that the shared suffering brought, and recognized just how rare moments like that are. The time during Woolsey was legitimately one of my favorite memories as an SLA. I guess you could call that a kind of hope — appreciating the beauty of a really hard situation.”

- Luke Vorster
“I know something that brought me hope during November was the way my friends took such good care of me right after borderline. They (and they know who they are) literally didn’t leave my side, and their presence and support that day was a good reminder that God’s love was stronger.”
- Hattie Pace

“Just realizing that I had peers and family members surrounding me and supporting me who were experiencing the same events. More so just Pepperdine students as a whole coming together and supporting one another despite not even knowing each other.”
- Arman Kosoyan

“I had a very established friend group who were very supportive last year. Everyone made sure we all had a place to stay during the fires.”
- Kai Nakkim

“OK so in regards to the events of November, I carpooled home with one of my residents and I remember just being in awe of her maturity and serenity throughout it all. Seeing an 18-year-old who I was supposed to be mentoring and taking care of being composed and at peace truly inspired me and gave me hope in a time of a lot of struggle.”
- Paige Henson

“For me, hope came from the community I found along the way, especially at Pepperdine. Even when I felt alone, there was always someone there, just to be there.”
- Hannah Kate

“2 Corinthians 4:8-9: ‘We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;’”
- Janie Souza
Woolsey scars show ecological recovery, even as fire frequency rises

BY | MARISA DRAGOS
Plants in the Santa Monica Mountains are still recovering from Woolsey and the process will take at least another decade.

While fire may be a natural cycle of the Santa Monica Mountains, short-term plant life recovery is not.

"If you're interested in Mediterranean ecosystems, you're interested in fire," said Marti Witter, a fire ecologist with the National Park Service.

The Santa Monica Mountains are part of California's natural chaparral environment. Shrubs with large leaves dominate the landscape, designed to hold water through summer dry spells.

"Chaparral is like the perfect fuel. It has all the characteristics that makes it able to burn and burn rapidly and burn hot and spread quickly," Witter said. "If you get an ignition, you have the perfect storm for fire. So it will burn hot and it will spread fast and they usually stop when they hit the ocean or the weather changes."

These plants have adapted to fire, but only at natural intervals of 70 to 100 years. Recently, fires have occurred within seven to 15 years. Damage from the increased frequency has only been compounded by drought conditions.

Lee Kats, vice provost for research and strategic initiatives and Frank R. Seaver chair of Natural Science, cited Pepperdine Professor Steve Davis as the expert on wildfire impacts on local plants.

"Dr. Davis' data set is the one of the best, probably in the country, on the impacts of wildfire frequency, wildfire intensity on plans and vegetation systems," Kats said. Davis is abroad for the 2019-2020 school year as faculty in residence with the Pepperdine Buenos Aires program.

Junior biology major Brandon Grinovich said he worked in the fire recovery lab, specifically on a project examining plant population densities that builds off of Davis' data beginning in 1986. He has noticed a sharp decline in the number of wild seeding plants in a plot on the Malibu campus above Baxter Drive.

"They were probably like 60% of the relative density of the plot," Grinovich said. "And now it's more like we actually didn't find any up there at all. Which is saddening, to say the least."

Kevin Gaston, an ecologist and director of planning and strategy for the Mountains Restoration Trust, said most chaparral plants take 10 to 20 years to develop their seed banks. If a fire comes before that, the plant simply isn't prepared.

"I'd say this is the first fire I've seen in awhile where we did get a large amount of rain afterward, so the regrowth of species like scrub oak, toyon, some of these more obligate resprouters — we're actually seeing pretty good recovery of those," Gaston said. "Overall the upland is actually doing pretty well."

Witter agreed that the recovery from Woolsey is progressing well, especially as compared to the 2013 Springs Fire, which burned over 30,000 acres in the west end of the Santa Monica Mountains.

"Actually, Woolsey is a really good news story; I mean apart from the amazing devastation to the communities and the huge economic toll of a wildfire," Witter said. "It was a well-timed fire for us and there's been amazing recovery in it. We have seen a lot of dieback [when a plant begins to die due to poor conditions] from the five-year drought that we had just before Woolsey."

Specifically, Grinovich said a shrub called Ceanothus megacarpus had been dying out locally due to drought conditions. Witter said with seeds cued to fire, Woolsey helped spark a recovery process supported by post-fire rains.

"Things are looking very good just across the board for all of our native species," Witter said.

But Kats pointed out that stream ecosystems remain affected by displaced top soil from last year's fire.

"Our native streams have a natural topography to them," Kats said. "They have fast moving parts of the stream and they have slow deeper parts of the stream. What you see after a wildfire like Woolsey is kind of just a silted flat surface that shows no habitat diversity. You don't see fast areas, you don't see slow areas, you don't see deep areas."

Endangered red-legged frogs need deep pockets in streams to avoid predators. The Resource Conservation District got permission to dig out the stream to restore the frog’s habitat.

Kats said the intervention was nearly the first of its kind in California and seems to have worked. He said he is hoping to see further natural recovery in the streams, as many animals depend on this only source of freshwater in the mountains, but isn’t sure of a timeline.

"Being an ecologist, it's very unpredictable," Kats said. "Nature is highly variable."
Pepperdine pushes past its paralyzing past

BY | ANITIZ MUONAGOLU

With a past filled with pain, Pepperdine pushes forward with its new freshman class.

In the wake of the one-year anniversary of the Woolsey Fire and Borderline Shooting, Pepperdine continues to heal and grow from its losses and trauma. However, new perspectives from the freshman class show that the scars of last year won’t persist in future Waves who attend Pepperdine.

In less than one week, Pepperdine faced the loss of freshman Alaina Housley and the damage from the Woolsey Fire. The week of Nov. 7 will always be a time of remembrance and memorial for students, faculty and staff.

Despite this tragedy, not all members of the student body feel the same level of shock, trauma and tragedy. For the freshman class, the aspects of the fire hold a different meaning in regard to the environment and safety of Pepperdine.

For many, the tragedies of 2018 raise concerns of safety on campus and the safety of the Malibu community. However, overall the freshman class has a positive view on the security of Pepperdine and the Malibu campus.

“I feel pretty safe on campus, but everyone should have a sense of caution,” freshman Kaya Richardson said. Freshman Juliana Birlin agreed.

“I personally don’t feel unsafe on campus,” Birlin said.

Some would attribute this sense of safety to a lack of knowledge of these events, but that does not seem to be true. Due to news coverage and upperclassmen influence, the freshman class is both aware of these issues and capable of taking a look at it from an impartial standpoint.

“While I understand the fire was terrible and the nerves of the upperclassmen, but Pepperdine did handle the fire and they got through it,” freshman Danica Christy said.

This faith and sense of safety also extends to the Malibu community. Even after hearing about the events of the Borderline Shooting and the tragic loss of Alaina Housley, the freshman class still remains realistic of the current societal climate and feels secure in their safety.

“It’s sad but shootings can happen anywhere, but I don’t feel unsafe in Malibu or specifically at Pepperdine,” freshman Ishaan Mehta said.

However, the freshman class remains cautious and takes note of upperclassmen and alumni who have experienced these tragic events first hand.

“The most dangerous things on campus are the things that can be found off campus, so a good level of alertness should be normal,” freshman Kristopher Gordon said. “I mean the location of Pepperdine is very thought out and my siblings [Kristopher has had three of his older siblings who have attended Pepperdine] have never felt in danger.”

Personally, as a freshman, the tragedies and atrocities of the Borderline Shooting and Woolsey Fire will never waiver my faith in Pepperdine. I firmly believe Pepperdine does all it can to keep its students, faculty and staff safe.

The freshman class is the best class to look at during this one-year anniversary. While the wounds of last year are still fresh, it’s outstanding to know that the future of Pepperdine will be without fear.

We will all reminisce, mourn and continue to grow from the losses of last year; but, with this new group of freshman, Pepperdine will not have to worry about being defined by its pain.

My class of 2023 is a beacon of the progressing views of Pepperdine and the constant pursuit of knowledge without fear. We freely received the gift of being able to learn from the tragedies of the past; so, that we can freely give back to the future of Pepperdine.

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Jalen Frantal returned for his second year with us and shares, “My favorite part about living at Calamigos is definitely the community that we have here. Not only do I get to live in one of the most beautiful locations in Malibu, but I get to experience it with some of my closest friends. On top of it all, the management team here is fully committed to supporting students and ensuring they have the best possible time while at Pepperdine. They truly want the best for us and will do everything they can to put students first and make them feel as though they're part of one big family. My decision to live at Calamigos has definitely been one of the largest contributors to the fantastic experience I've had at Pepperdine.”

Calamigos is an amazing place to stay during your junior & senior years! Let us give you a tour of our resort and talk to you about your housing options – students can lock their Fall 2020 housing in now! Set up an appointment by emailing: BrianD@calamigos.com

Find out more about Pepperdine’s premier off-campus housing: www.semesterbysthesea.com